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NEW STATES

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NEW STATESMAN Vol 101 No 2623 26 June 1981

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Denis MacShane reports from Paris

On to round three: the fight with the capitalists

AP

Come on in, socialism's lovely

IT TOOK Jean-Pierre Chèvenment, leader of the neo-Marxist Ceres group inside the Socialist Party, to make the point amid all the rejoicing on Sunday. In a late-night discussion on television he observed that, despite winning the Presidency and the National Assembly, the Socialists had not achieved complete power: 'Economic power still escapes us and the external situation is not all that favourable.' Chèvenment is Mitterrand's Minister of Research and what he was suggesting (in an unministerial kind of way) was that although Giscardism had been decisively defeated, the fight with French capital was only just beginning.

The franc has fallen since Mitterrand's presidential victory and share prices on the Paris *Bourse* have declined 30 per cent. Although Socialist ministers have made reassuring noises about the need to keep up investment, the prospect of nationalisation, the promised wealth tax and the attractiveness of 20 per cent interest rates on the American money market are unlikely to persuade the financial institutions to invest in a socialist France. In talks with the unions on Monday, the *Patronat* (France's CBI) refused to make any serious concession towards the 35 hour week, although negotiations on this had already been dragging on for more than a year. The issue was a central plank in the PS manifesto and thus can be said to have been popularly endorsed. Of course, the PS could push through legislation, but the *Patronat* has given an early indication that it is unlikely to co-operate with the new majority.

The French media are already girding themselves for battle. *France-Soir*, the country's biggest-selling paper, splashed with a front-page headline a few days before the election accusing the Socialist Health Minister of depriving 74 kidney patients of their dialysis machines. It was wholly untrue, not even supported by the full story underneath the headline, and was a taste of media treatment to come.

If the Socialist government has the French bourgeoisie range against it from above, it also faces growing expectation from below. Rising prices, rising unemployment and a great deal of disguised poverty and hardship were Giscard's legacy. 'Life must get better, that's why we voted him out,' said workers at the Gare de Lyon.

The government's immediate creation of 54,000 jobs will hardly soak up this summer's school leavers, and the ranks of France's 1.8 million unemployed are expected to grow. The increase of 10 per cent in the minimum wage affects only about 20 per cent of French wage earners. While the trade unions — both the Socialist CFDT and the Communist CGT — are initially supporting Mitterrand, that support cannot last if their members do not see fairly swift improvements in their standards of living and in the attitudes of French employers, who are among the most reactionary in Europe.

Many yearn for a dramatic social breakthrough like that achieved by Leon Blum's Popular Front government of 1936. Blum, however, managed only 12 months in office. Mitterrand wants to run his full term of seven years. □

Michael Rose on shopfloor attitudes

How unlike our own class war

PRESIDENT MITTERRAND is expected to be heavily dependent on the co-operation of France's trade union movement if his Socialist Party's programme of reform is to work. If Britain's example is anything to go by, he'll be in trouble. Here, the Labour Party and the unions have regularly failed to agree on important political issues. However, there are marked differences between the attitudes of French and British union activists, according to a new survey, funded by the Social Science Research Council.

The data comes from some 150 interviews with plant-level unionists — mainly shop stewards in Britain and *delegués* (the nearest cross-channel equivalent) in France. The table shows their answers to two key questions.

Most French trade unionists appear to see themselves as true class warriors, less concerned with winning immediate gains at plant level than with grooming workers for a revolutionary effort, local grievances tend to be viewed there as instances of general class conflict. In Britain, even militant left-wingers refused to see things in this light — perhaps partly because it would lose them the support of many of their rank and file members. France has a much lower rate of union membership.

Although the majority of French interviewees worked for state-owned industries, compared with about half of the British sample, they tended to believe that managers and the technocrats who administer large parts of the French economy were just front-men for the bourgeoisie. This is further evidence of the French disbelief in the utility of plant or industry-level negotiation: the top managerial monkey will only give away what

Mitterrand & Mauroy

the capitalist organ grinder lets him.

The French unionists showed a far greater familiarity with the international dimensions of economic life and union action. Although their general knowledge of multinational business power was not strikingly better than that of the British stewards, they had a more definite idea of its structure and logic. The British, while no less hostile to the multinationals, were less often able to explain why. The French were more likely to know something about the way their unions were linked at an international level. □

Michael Rose is a senior lecturer in industrial studies at Bath University.

"There are plenty of problems and disputes in the workplace that don't have much to do with wider social and political issues."

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly disagree
French	15%	13%	7%	41%	24%
British	11%	74%	4%	11%	—

"Real power in modern industry is in the hands of top managers: even the people who actually own a business can't control them."

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly disagree
French	2%	2%	11%	37%	47%
British	4%	48%	15%	24%	9%

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Shoddy evidence puts many innocents in jail. Rob Rohrer looks at some recent cases.

No compensation for wrongful imprisonment

AN INNOCENT man who served nearly six years in prison for violent robbery is being refused compensation by the Home Office — even though a 'super-grass' has confessed to the crime, named others as accomplices, and had the robbery taken into consideration when he was sentenced. Earlier this month Home Secretary William Whitelaw told the man's MP he could not act 'merely on the word of another convicted criminal'.

The case against Tony Stock, a 42-year-old unemployed man, now living in Shropshire, rested entirely on contradictory identification evidence and contested police 'verbals'. The 'verbals' were given to the Court in 1970 by a West Yorkshire detective who subsequently left the force after being acquitted of corruption and disciplinary charges, during which he admitted he would 'bend the rules'. Stock was found guilty of a Leeds supermarket robbery and sentenced to 10 years. Throughout the 1970s he protested his innocence, appealed unsuccessfully to the European Commission at Strasbourg, went on a 97 day hunger strike and was force-fed by warders.

In 1978, sometime after Stock's release, Samuel Benefield — one of the so-called supergrasses — made a long confession which included the Leeds robbery. He named four accomplices, none of them known to Stock.

In denying Stock compensation, or hope of a pardon, Whitelaw this month explicitly recorded his Department's harsh guiding principles. 'It was impossible to establish definitely,' he wrote 'that Mr Stock did *not* commit the offence of which he was convicted.' In other words for the innocent to obtain compensation they must prove their innocence not just beyond reasonable doubt, but absolutely — a Home Office policy which inverts English Justice's most cherished tenet.

THE BRITISH Government takes a hard line on compensation for the innocent. Awards are discretionary and payable only in cases of exceptional hardship and where imprisonment can clearly be attributed to the negligence or impropriety of the police or other officials. The quality of a person's innocence is decided privately by juries of Home Office Civil Servants who may then decide to forward a claim to an independent assessor who settles the amount of compensation.

The record, £65,000 compensation paid last week to those wrongly convicted of Maxwell Confait's murder is a further measure of Whitehall's attachment to the 'innocence beyond reasonable doubt' principle. Three years ago Colin Lattimore, Ronald Leighton, and Ahmet Salih were offered a paltry £1,000 each for their treatment. This amount was thought perfectly adequate by Sir Walker Carter, the Home Office assessor who was then Chairman of the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board.

Carter stressed he had *disregarded* the findings of the Fisher Report (which mistakenly found that Leighton and Salih 'on the balance of probability' killed Confait). But last week's award was patently influenced by the new evidence received last year by the Attorney General which established the role of others in Confait's murder.

Syndication International

PA

Some of the innocents: above, Jack Preece who was released on 19 June after serving 8 years of a life sentence, and right, two of the men wrongly imprisoned for Confait's murder.

Only a handful of people are compensated for wrongful detention. In 1979, 1700 people remanded in custody before their trial were subsequently acquitted. None was compensated. And Home Office records show that in the ten years between 1969-79 no person acquitted at their initial trial was paid compensation. Claims for compensation are not legally aided which leaves most applicants at the mercy of the Home Office. The level of the few payments made is often erratic, and always substantially less than the damages that would be set if the matter was decided in Court.

Tony Burke, the Liverpool man wrongfully imprisoned for murder (*NS* 5 October 1979) was initially offered £7,000 for his 18 months behind bars. Only after protests was this increased to £10,000.

Patrick Meehan served 7 years of a life sentence for a murder in Ayr and in 1977 turned down £7,000 as an 'insult'. He now awaits the long delayed Hunter Report on his wrongful conviction.

Last December, the New Zealand Government agreed to pay £400,000 to one man — Arthur Allan Thomas — wrongly imprisoned for nine years after fabricated forensic evidence obtained his conviction for murder.

The Home Office is substantially less generous. Between 1969-79 it paid out less than £150,000 to 33 people who had all been wrongly convicted and imprisoned.

The arbitrary Home Office practice disturbs many lawyers. After several years' study of compensation cases the National Council for Civil Liberties is preparing a campaign to persuade Parliament to give innocent people a legally-aided right to compensation, assessed openly in the courts. Whitehall's chief fear is that this will open the flood gates, enriching those whose innocence, despite acquittal in the courts, was questionable.

Rob Edwards reports on 'secret' shipments of Dounreay's plutonium

Deadly cargoes round Scotland's coast

ENOUGH PLUTONIUM for up to 60 Nagasaki-type bombs could be shipped around the west coast of Scotland every year if the UK Atomic Energy Authority (UKAEA) goes ahead with plans to transport plutonium nitrate by sea from Dounreay in Caithness to Windscale in Cumbria.

The shipments which started last week, are a vital stage in the development of the Fast Breeder Reactor. Plutonium nitrate solution is extracted from the spent fuel of Dounreay's Prototype Fast Reactor (PFR), the aim being to send it to Windscale to be fabricated into new fuel rods for return to Dounreay, and thereby to close the fast reactors fuel cycle. The long journeys are necessary, according to the UKAEA, because it would be too expensive to build a plutonium fabrication plant at Dounreay.

Plutonium nitrate is the most sensitive material in the fuel cycle: apart from being extremely toxic it is in a form very close to pure plutonium metal, the raw material of the crude type of atomic bomb that devastated Nagasaki. Reportedly, 150-200 kilograms of plutonium have already been extracted at Dounreay, even though the PFR has been operating at an average load factor of only eight per cent over the last five years. Although the precise quantities to be shipped are classified, Energy Under Secretary Norman Lamont has said that each of the two containers to be used has a design capacity of 'a few tens of kilograms'. Given that seven shipments are expected each year, more than 400 kilogrammes could be involved: it takes just seven kilogramme of plutonium to make an atomic explosion.

Such a cargo will of course be subject to security precautions, the nature of which is secret. It will presumably to guarded by some of the UKAEA's 600 'special constables', who are legally empowered to carry machine guns and engage in 'hot pursuit' of suspected persons. The timing of the first voyage should have been secret but so far the press and anti-nuclear activists have always managed to discover the industry's plans in advance.

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Philip Geddes on a £2bn shock

Trident will cost £8 billion

AS MR Nott's Defence review nears completion the authoritative Centre for Defence Studies at Aberdeen University has produced a price tag for the Trident nuclear system of £8 billion — way above the current Ministry of Defence estimate of £6 billion. It is based on the assumption that Britain will opt for the D4 missile and the Ohio class submarine. However, both of these have been giving the Americans problems, and the US Navy is now seriously thinking of opting for a more sophisticated version of the missile — the D5. This would need larger submarines as launch pads and involve higher servicing and maintenance costs. It could give Mrs Thatcher an excuse to withdraw from a game Britain can no longer afford to play.

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Patrick Wintour reports a mounting row over Mike Cooley's dismissal from Lucas

The man who planned 'socially useful' products

FIVE THOUSAND members of Tass, the white collar union, in Lucas Industries are to go on official strike this Friday in support of Mike Cooley, a senior Tass representative who has been sacked by management. In May Cooley was given three months' notice but this Tuesday he was told to leave immediately the Willesden factory where he works and not to return. Shop stewards in Rolls Royce and in British Aerospace working on the Tornado project have already started 'blacking' Lucas products. Further support is expected from Transport union members at airports.

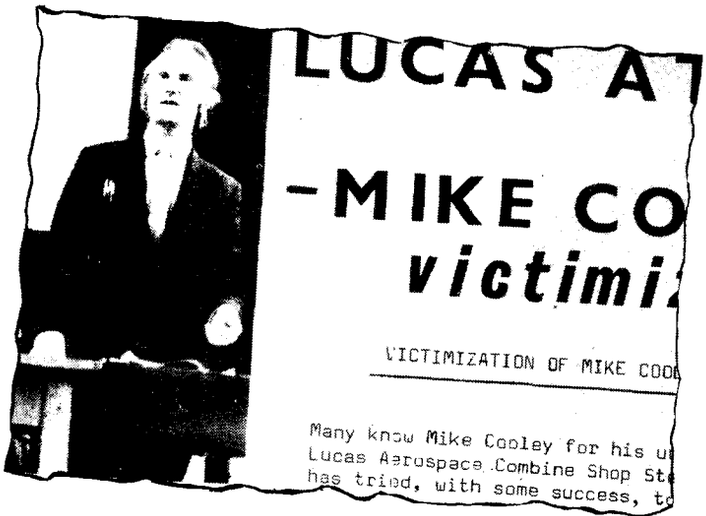
Lucas say Cooley has been sacked for repeatedly taking time off for unofficial union work but Tass national officer Jack Carr says it is 'undoubtedly discrimination and part of an attack on union organisation in Lucas'. One of Britain's most articulate shop stewards and a former President of Tass, Cooley has worked at Lucas for 18 years. He has been instrumental in encouraging the Lucas workers' alternative corporate plan, which has won international acclaim and which forced the company to reduce its redundancy programme. His special interests are the effects of automation on the industrial worker, and socially useful products. He is author of two books on these subjects.

Management claim that Cooley took 33½ days off last year for unofficial union work and 13 days in 1981 before they gave him his dismissal notice. They say these absences make him unsuitable to work in the design team at the Willesden plant, which is due to begin work on the Stingray missile project in August. They offered him an alternative job with the same pay as a training officer. When he refused this he was sacked and told his notice took effect on 10 August. Management made their pre-emptive strike this week as sympathy for Cooley grew.

Phil Asquith, a member of the Tass Lucas negotiating team, points out that all Cooley's time off was unpaid and was logged in a departmental book beforehand, as is the custom in the company. Eight of the days taken off last year and classified as unofficial by the company were, in fact, official work with the joint management-government-union working party looking at the company's rationalisation plans. Lucas also regard as unofficial Cooley's work on new technology. As member of the Tass Lucas negotiating committee, he went to speak about new technology to the ASTMS Lucas negotiating committee: this was deemed unofficial work by the company. Most of his other unofficial work was associated with the Lucas alternative corporate plan.

On 5 June at a meeting at the Willesden plant, Cooley agreed that in future he would only take official time off. This did not satisfy Lucas management. They insisted that a design engineer working on Stingray must be constantly present and that even official union work would take him away too frequently. This breached a ten-year-old agreement, reaffirmed last year, that Tass representatives would not have their employment conditions or promotion prospects affected by their union activity. If allowed to set a precedent, it would also mean that designers could not have a union representative working alongside them. Faced by these criticisms, the company altered its position and now says that, 'in light of past experience', it does not trust Cooley's promise to undertake only official union work.

The sacking coincides with a period of increasing aggression from Lucas management. They have given a non-negotiable wage award this year of 5 per cent; they have imposed new technology at individual plants without reaching any overall agreement with the union combine; they have undertaken a major drive towards Japanese-style industrial relations and productivity figures; they have attempted, unsuccessfully, to sack an APEX union representative in Liverpool; and they are currently suing the Willesden Tass workers for £43,500 for losses caused by Tass workers banning overtime earlier this year in support of Lucas workers facing redundancy elsewhere in the group. □



Leaflet from the support committee asking for letters of support for Mr Cooley to Chairman, Lucas Industries, Great King Street, Birmingham

Duncan Campbell

Arms salesmen did cook the books—official

INTERNATIONAL Military Services Ltd, the MoD's arms-sales company, has been censured by the Public Accounts Committee for omitting 'significant' details from its accounts. IMS went into loss through the collapse of numerous profitable deals which relied on the Shah of Iran: the directors obscured this fact by rejigging the accounts so that £6 million profit appeared in place of £0.5 million trading loss. The difference was £7 million interest on large Iranian funds still held by IMS. (*NS* 16 October 1980).

The MoD acknowledged the purpose of the rejig, but said it was not illegal. The Public Accounts Committee suggests that it was misleading, and should have been recorded in the accounts — though the *New Statesman*'s description of this as 'doctoring' is rejected as 'invalid'.

The question of bribery is discreetly skirted. The Committee confirms the *NS* report that a £491,000 'commission payment' was made last year to a coded, numbered Swiss bank account. The MoD's contention that 'no bribes are paid' refers merely to direct cash handovers to foreign government officials: what agents do with their commission it isn't possible to say. So long as agents are employed, says the Committee, the possibility of corrupt payments 'is a matter for the government to take into account'.

Michael Coren presents the latest chapter of accidents among the Tory students

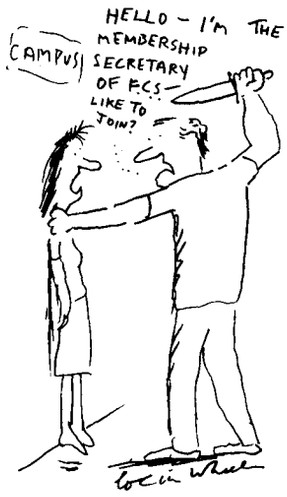
The fascist has gone, but the bully-boy remains

MORE DOCUMENTARY evidence has come to light concerning corruption and right-wing extremism inside the Federation of Conservative Students (FCS). In a letter to the Polytechnic of North London Executive, Nicholas O'Connor of FCS states that the Federation will not be applying for a budget next year.

> . . . you may be interested to know that it is very likely that a branch of the British Movement will be set up in this polytechnic and I will be concentrating my energies on this task.

FCS moderates state that the North London incident is only uncommon because 'this time they have been stupid enough to put something in writing'. Another letter which appeared in the fascist magazine *Spearhead* was written by the seconder of the incoming chairman of FCS, Tim Linacre.

Bizarre developments in FCS are perhaps to be expected in view of the history of Peter Young, the main force behind FCS. In January 1980 he obtained much publicity when he was arrested in Poland for what he called 'political crimes'. Research by the anti-fascist magazine *Searchlight*, and by the *New Statesman*, reveals that the Polish authorities say Young was detained for just two hours after being caught trying to smuggle glassware through customs. (The National Association for Freedom's paper reported Young as saying he had been held for eight hours.)



Earlier, at Aberdeen University, he gained a reputation for dubious methods. In 1977 he was caught trying to forge signatures on an election paper for a female FCS candidate in the medical faculty. Later, he alleged in his student paper *Campus* that another woman student had 'slept round the executive': she threatened to sue, and Young settled out of court.

To round off his 'honest Tory' character, Young appears to have resorted to bully-boy dramatics when politically frustrated. When three Broad Left students were in the same room with him, he wielded a knife, and threatened them. Later, he said he was drunk, but one eye-witness says he appeared to be serious.

Presumably, if journalists and moderate Tory students are capable of discovering the truth about FCS, so could Tory Central Office. This does not appear to have happened yet. □

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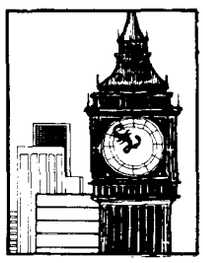


Peter Kellner, Political Editor

Manipulating the mushy majority

DENIS HEALEY has been spending much of the past week brandishing the results of last Sunday's MORI poll in the *Sunday Times*, showing that he is the preferred choice of most trade unionists for Labour's deputy leadership. Eliminating John Silkin and the don't knows, Healey's lead over Tony Benn is five-to-one.

To Labour's right, that finding confirms what they (and the polls) have said all along: left-wing policies and leaders are unpopular with Labour voters. Further ammunition is provided with the publication this week of *The Gallup Report**, a compendium of 1980 Gallup Poll findings. (The book is not just about politics, by the way. It also informs us, for example, that 14 per cent of adults stay up after midnight — a seven-fold increase on 22 years ago — and that only five per cent of *Dallas* viewers correctly guessed that Kristin shot J.R.)

One previously unpublished but significant finding is that only 8 per cent of Labour supporters regard themselves 'far' or 'substantially' to the left of the political spectrum. Another 37 per cent told Gallup they were 'moderately' or 'slightly' to the left — while 55 per cent of Labour supporters did not place themselves on the left at all. (Eight per cent said they were 'middle of the road', 24 per cent placed themselves on the right, and 22 per cent did not know.)

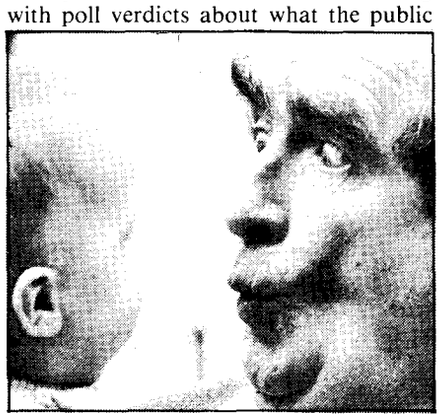
Poll results like that clearly beg a number of questions — like, what exactly does an elector mean when he describes himself as 'moderately left' or 'middle of the road'? In objective terms, the answer is probably not much: it represents a subjective state of mind, rather than an off-the-shelf package of predictable policy attitudes.

Even so, subjective attitudes do matter. If most Labour supporters do not think of themselves as on the left, then it is likely to be a hard task to persuade them to support a slate of policies and leaders they regard as left-wing.

WHEN CONCLUSIONS like that are drawn, Labour left-wingers are apt to cry foul, and generally imitate John McEnroe's response to an unfavourable line-call. And sometimes the way poll stories are written up will tend to confirm the suspicion that they are simply part of some media plot against the left. For example, it was naughty of the *Sunday Times* to omit the fact that its figures for the miners (81 per cent for Healey, 19 per cent for Benn) were based on a sample of just *nineteen* union members.

On the whole, though, polls provide a far more accurate gauge of public opinion than it is possible to obtain any other way. By blindly condemning all polls, the left surrenders the chance to argue a more useful and interesting case: that while most voters' instincts are to keep things the way they are and to resist change, perhaps it is possible to radicalise them with effective campaigning.

In practical terms, that means starting with poll verdicts about what the public thinks today about this or that issue — and then going on to ask how many voters are set in their attitudes, and how many may change their minds (and why).



Topix

What do you mean, you support Tony Benn?

One of America's leading pollsters, Daniel Yankelovich, has tried to tackle this kind of question, and come up with what he calls a 'mushiness index'. As he puts it, 'we need to know when a figure citing "60 per cent approval" means that 60 per cent of the public has truly decided in favour of a particular alternative, or when "60 per cent approval" means mere lip-service.' To dramatise his point, Yankelovich asked one sample of voters what Ameican policy should be to 'the new African nation of Nami' — a wholly fictional state invented as a 'confusion control device'. 83 per cent of the sample nevertheless expressed an opinion — underlining the need, in Yankelovich's mind, not to accept the results to attitude questions at face value.

To construct his 'mushiness index' for a given issue, Yankelovich asks his sample how much they have heard or read about it recently, how much the issue affects them personally, whether people they admire think the same way as themselves, and how likely interviewees think they are to change their minds.

Yankelovich then combines the answers to these questions, and assesses how 'mushy' and how 'firm' attitudes on each side of a contentious issue are. He believes he can also isolate the source of 'mushiness' — and so draw lessons for politicians who want to alter public opinion. On nuclear power, for example, 'mushy' interviewees do not feel personally affected by the issue; on most foreign policy questions, America's 'mushy' voters do not feel well enough informed.

It would be difficult to import the 'mushiness index' in this form to Britain. For one thing it would raise the cost of published polls to prohibitive heights; for another there are likely to be class and regional distortions that it would be difficult to iron out. MORI's experience, for example, is that the Welsh and Scots tend to polarise their opinions into 'strongly' agree/disagree statements, while the English more diffidently 'tend to' agree or disagree about things. The English, MORI's Bob Worcester suspects, would *appear* more mushy on a Yankelovich scale than the Scots or Welsh.

But then, perhaps they *are* more mushy. Not the least fascinating reason to experiment with the 'mushiness index' in Britain would be to find out. □

*Edited by Norman Webb and Robert Wybrow, published by Sphere, £1.95.

Warrington: will history repeat itself?

AS ROY JENKINS limbers up to fight the Warrington by-election, he might care to reflect on one historical precedent. In March 1931 Sir Oswald Mosley, with a group of other Labour MPs, broke away to form their New Party. Within a few weeks it decided to contest a by-election just a few miles away from Warrington — at Ashton-under-Lyne. Now, I'm not suggesting that today's Social Democrats have any fascist tendencies; all the same there are some rather curious parallels.

Then, as now, the Labour renegades offered themselves on a platform of giving Britain a new start, freed from the shackles of the Labour and Conservative parties. Then, as now, reform of the Parliamentary system was offered as the key to economic recovery (although, of course, Mosley did not exactly mean proportional representation). Then, as now, Labour had held the seat at the previous general election. Then, as now, the Liberals chose not to contest the by-election.

In Ashton, the New Party's candidate, Allen Young, attracted an enormous amount of attention. Witness this account, in *The Times*, of his opening campaign meeting:

> The Mosley Party are greatly encouraged by their opening night . . . A well-filled town hall and two overflow meetings, at one of which Lady Cynthia Mosley held a big audience together in the rain, followed by numerous inquiries and offers for help for their organisation, are felt to be some compensation for the shortness of time allowed for the contest.

Mosley subsequently wrote in his autobiography that 'the size and enthusiasm of our meetings had caused rumours to circulate in London that we were winning.' *The Times*'s man on the spot, however, was consistently sceptical, and pointedly described the

> great difference between a body of political opinion already existing in the town seeking a suitable spokesman in Parliament, and a would-be spokesman of an outside party using a by-election to try to attract a body of followers.

On the day, Young obtained 4,472 votes — 16 per cent of the total — a figure that 'greatly encouraged' Mosley, who promised to field 400 candidates at the following election. In fact the Ashton by-election marked the beginning of the end for the New Party. It put up just 22 candidates at the general election six months later. They all lost. □

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LIFE INSURANCE

Sex, greed and salesmanship

Trevor Deaves is 27 and says he is a millionaire. He has built up a company called Berkeley-Walbrook into one of the biggest life insurance brokers in Britain, with 250 full-time salesmen. BW creates am image of opulence, helpfulness and professionalism. In fact it sets out to con customers into buying second-rate savings policies they can ill-afford.

On the facing page we present Deaves's own candid account — as offered in private to other insurance salesmen — of his methods. On page 8 we reveal some of the untruths used by one BW salesman to try to sell insurance to the *NS*'s Peter Kellner. But first, a report by ANTHEA MASEY, an experienced financial journalist, who briefly joined BW to discover how it works from the inside.

Trevor Deaves

Laurie Sparham, Network.

I WAS TAKEN on to the staff of the Holborn branch of Berkeley-Walbrook last November after two gruesome interviews both lasting nearly two hours. At the second interview I met Trevor Deaves.

He was more interested in my sex life than my previous job history. According to the BW philosophy it is difficult to sell life insurance unless you are what Trevor Deaves calls a 'switched on person'. 'Wanker' is one of Trevor Deaves's favourite words. He said I would soon discover whether I was one if I worked for him — few people having the opportunity to test themselves to the limit and find out if they can rise to the challenge. I was then subjected to a ten-minute diatribe on the merits of Margaret Thatcher as the nation's saviour.

There were three teams in the Holborn office. The leaders, Nic Uglow, Alistair McGinn and Odette Sumerling (who has now left to set up on her own), were all competing for promotion to manager of the Holborn branch.

I was taken on by the Holborn branch because my predecessor walked out after three days and Odette Sumerling needed a replacement fast if she was to stay in the race for branch manager.

The work is highly regimented with twice weekly sales meetings at the tail-end of every Wednesday and Friday. At the Holborn office these are either taken by Trevor Deaves or one of his three lieutenants. Deaves is an impressive orator. He can talk with ease and authority without notes for several hours.

I saw him in action three times at branch meetings. On the first occasion he swaggered into the office saying: 'I walk into this office and I listen to you on the telephone and what do I hear? Nothing but negative vibes. I can close my ears to negative vibes (he dramatically opens his jacket and then closes it tightly round himself). But your clients what do they hear? Well, I will tell you what they hear. They hear nothing but negs, negs, negs.'

He then went on to humiliate one of his more saggy salesmen: 'Sit up you, come on sit up. I gave you the phone numbers of three women last week. What have you done about it, have you rung any of them? No, did you say no? I thought not and shall I tell you why? It's because you were just scared shitless!'

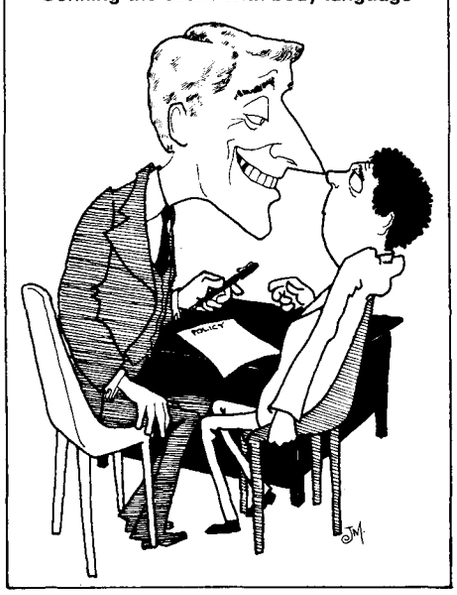
The following week he sold a policy to a client in front of the whole branch. No salesman is meant to make appointments during the time set aside for branch meetings. One girl made the mistake, and after Deaves had rapped her over the knuckles he decided to give a practical demonstration of how to sell a policy in front of 20 salesmen.

The client arrived at around half past four in the afternoon. No one left before seven that Friday evening. The client was determined not to buy a policy. As he was being cross-examined it became obvious that he had only come in order to be chatted up by the salesgirl.

Trevor Deaves kept up the sales talk for two and a half hours during which time the client's whole life was laid bare and dissected. It was also clear that Trevor Deaves had no intention of letting him go, or his audience of 20 salesmen, until he had bought a policy. At a quarter to seven he caved in and agreed.

BERKELEY-WALBROOK don't put their salesmen through a training course before they let them loose on the public. I was told that it wasn't necessary to know anything about life insurance to be able to sell it. But I was taught how to trick switchboard girls as I compiled my list of names to contact. ▶

Conning the client with body language



When to say no

TAX INCENTIVES are the main reason for saving through an insurance policy rather than directly into a building society or unit trust. For every £100 saved through an approved life insurance policy, the Inland Revenue adds £17.65, to bring the total to £117.65. Some of this is then deducted for insurance, and some is deducted in commission — to pay the companies that run the policies, and the salesmen who sell them.

The life insurance trade body, the Life Offices Association, sets limits on the commissions that should be deducted from premiums. But Berkeley-Walbrook, like some other brokers, deals with companies that do not belong to the LOA, and which often pay higher commission to salesman.

During my time in BW's Holborn office, the Trident Life Personal Wealth Plan was the best-selling savings plan — mainly because Trident Life pays BW at least the whole of the first year's premiums back in commission each time it sells one of their policies. A savings policy offering good value pays commission of no more than 60 per cent of the first year's premium.

To show how charges affect performance, a recent book, *Unit-linked Regular Savings Plans,* published by *Money Management* magazine, compared the amount different policies would pay out assuming that the value of the units bought all grew at the same rate. Trident Life's Personal Wealth Plan was ranked 77 out of 104 policies for a man aged 29 saving £10 a month for ten years. The best policy gave a projected maturity value of £1,667 after ten years — nearly 30 per cent more than Trident Life's £1,279.

The companies listed below do not belong to the Life Offices Association. If you are approached by a salesman trying to sell you a policy from one of these companies (even if he is less persistent than a BW salesman), think very carefully first. It is unlikely to offer you good value for money. You are likely to get a better deal from an LOA company. (The LOA can be contacted at Aldermary House, Queen Street, London, EC4. Telephone: 01-248 4477.)

Abbey Life
AMEV Life
Albany Life
City of Westminster
Cornhill
Irish Life
Lloyd's Life
Merchant Investors
Schroder Life
Skandia Life
Target Life
Trident Life

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▶ I was given a copy of Yellow Pages and told to write down the numbers of companies working in and around the Holborn area. The names of the firms didn't matter, nor what they did.

I then telephoned the numbers pretending to be a firm of solicitors. I said I was returning Mr Whitaker's call. I explained that I was not sure whether it was the right name. My secretary had taken the message and her writing wasn't very clear. Could the switchboard girl please help me? This usually resulted in the swtichboard girl reading out a list of names from her internal directory.

Deceiving switchboard girls is an extremely unethical means of obtaining the names of prospective clients — in some instances it can be illegal — for example when posing as a solicitor. I was doing this with the certain knowledge of my branch manager, Odette Sumerling, and yet I was never told to alter my story.

Half way through my second day at BW, I started 'cold-calling' from my list of 500 names. This is the practice of knocking on doors or telephoning people out of the blue and touting for business.

BW is different from most other direct selling insurance operations. The salesman doesn't leave his office, instead he asks his prospective client or 'prospect' to come in and see him at one of BW's own offices. It is much harder to make appointments this way. But it is extremely efficient of the salesman's time: he doesn't turn up for appointments only to be told that the client has gone out, he doesn't have to tramp the streets on cold winter evenings and he always has someone to talk to when his morale sinks.

But because it is so much harder, the salesman is encouraged to be dishonest when he cold-calls. To help me conquer my nerves I was given a 'script' which actively discouraged me from mentioning the fact that I was selling life insurance. Instead I was told to call myself a tax adviser or consultant and to give the impression that I had my own business practice.

I WAS TOLD to cold-call standing up and smiling. Standing up because it gave me a psychological advantage over the 'prospect', even though he couldn't see me. Smiling because it makes the voice sound pleasant and relaxed.

Clients are too polite to say what they expect and many come out of curiosity. At the Holborn office what they find is a large open-plan office which offers no privacy whatsoever. Here they are asked details of their income, savings and investments in full view of the rest of the staff and perhaps half a dozen or more clients.

I was told to 'ID' with my client as soon as he walked through the door. This is short for identify — making your client feel at home, making him feel you are interested in his family and work. It is totally cynical.

By this stage, trainees have been told very little about the product which they are meant to be selling, but a lot about 'body language'. The first principle of body language is where the salesman places his client's chair, so that he is sitting next to the salesman, almost facing him with knees nearly touching.

The rules tell him he is unlikely to sell insurance to someone who is sitting with his arms and legs crossed — it means the client is ▶

● *Trevor Deaves can be remarkably candid in the company of other insurance salesmen. In February he addressed a gathering of salesmen at a conference in Cheltenham organised by the Life Insurance Association. His speech was recorded by one of the participants; the* NS *has obtained a copy of the tape. These are some of the things Deaves said.*

I'M VERY MUCH into principles, black and white — do you know what I mean, black and white? Do you know what's black and white and goes round and round? A nun on a spit.

(A single, isolated, nervous laugh.)

Right, now I know what sort of audience you are, I'm going to have to watch it. Controversial, I wrote down here. Controversial, see if it works. Right, got you.

There's nothing that I have done in my business career to date that I've ever regretted, except that I didn't do more of it sooner. Everything that I do today in my daily, er, thing, I believe in. I believe most life assurance salesmen are useless, I really do. And that is not something to get — it just happens to be a fact. Useless.

I don't understand, by the way, about life assurance, I've got to tell you that. It's far too complicated. I mean, guys like that blow my mind. I don't understand the words, I don't understand any of it . . . I think I've got something like . . . over £180 per month in different policies, and I don't know what they're all for. I think they're about me making bread, if I live, and if I drop dead, somebody else making it, and I think that's generally it. And that's basically how I sell . . .

The only reason you go broking, by the way, is not to give the client a better deal, because most insurance companies have the whole range of products, which could cater for any client . . . The reason why we went into broking was that, you take ten insurance companies and you play them off against each other, that's why you go into broking. You say Terry, give us a television set, or we'll drop the account. He says, I'll give you ten. So anyway that's all about broking, nothing to do with clients . . .

This is how to make a fortune in the life assurance business. What you do is, you get hold of a client, like that, and you sit him down, and tell him the way it is, and he'll respect you for that. You will tell him he's useless, going nowhere. Without your help he will end up broke, poverty-stricken, on a pension or something, and if he dies, his family will be in the S — H — one — T. You tell him the way it is.

Then you say to him, I am not some wishy-washy salesman who is going to give me a lot of aggro so that you win the sale, so that you can walk out of here not having bought from me. So you are going to buy from me for a premium that is going to hurt, but not hurt so much that you cancel it. But it's going to hurt. I'm not interested in your fivers, I'm interested in your fifties. Because the fivers are insignificant ... I want the premium that hurts you a bit. And he says OK, fine, and he does it.

Now I say to him, every six months I will see you, irrespective, *irrespective*, of the weather, irrespective of your flu, I don't care, I will see you. My secretary will ring you up and you will come in.

And I will say to you, I want some more money. And you will say to me, I haven't got any, and we will have this argument every six months. Now if you're going to be a client of mine for the next fifteen or twenty years . . . then I'm going to see you a lot of times . . . Now the more arguments you win, the less money you will have when you drop dead. Not *if* you drop dead, *when* you drop dead. Therefore would you like the guy that you're seeing every six months to be weak, and allow you to win all the arguments? And he says, well no. Great. So when I see you next time, no arguments, just money. *(laughter and applause.)*

If you sock it to people, they love you. They really, really get into you in a big way. The harder you are with people, the more they respect you. The weaker you are, the less they respect you. How many people here *sell*, and how many *hope orders are placed?...*

I have a goal. There's nothing else. I have a goal, only one business goal left for me. And that's to write one billion, billion sums assured. And I will do that within the next five years. And that's so exciting for me. One billion is a thousand million. I'm really into that. It turns me on. Not making more money, because money is a by-product of success. Money is totally irrelevant.

The best things in life are achieving goals. The best things in life are laying ladies. Selling policies and selling jobs — that's what I do; but also it's like pulling ladies. Now I'm single so I can talk about this. If you're married you may now switch off, because it doesn't apply, and if it does you're in trouble. There's going to be a lapsed policy and the surrender charges are heavy! Past performance is no guide to future performance, right? And that's the trouble every time you meet a woman.

Do you know, virtually every really beautiful lady, especially the ones that get queues of guys after them, get fed up with guys who won't close the deal . . . Whether you're selling your body, or whether you're selling a big plan, you have first of all got to believe, number one, they are getting the good deal; number two, don't waffle, just close them — that's what they want.

The way to make a lot of money is to sell a lot of policies. And the way to sell a lot of policies is to arrange your life so that you're very efficient. And what you don't do is travel to see clients. You get them to travel to see you. And then you sit in your big chair and talk down to these people and do them favours all day long. And you make a fortune, and you spend it, and you love it. And that's it. □

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Contd from p7

in an aggressive and unreceptive mood. Apparently women are more difficult to read in this way than men.

The BW sales pitch is geared to selling ten-year savings plans — the type which offer the most generous commission payments. With the help of a graph-like diagram drawn in coloured inks, the salesman tries to persuade his 'prospect' that his earnings are likely to go up for ten years and then start to level off. Clients are spun the same story whatever their personal circumstances and almost regardless of their age — they could be 20, they could be 50.

Now, playing on the fear he has planted in his client's mind, the salesman says he knows how to provide him with a 'cash reservoir' for when he needs it. He writes the words 'cash reservoir' in big red or green letters at the top of his diagram.

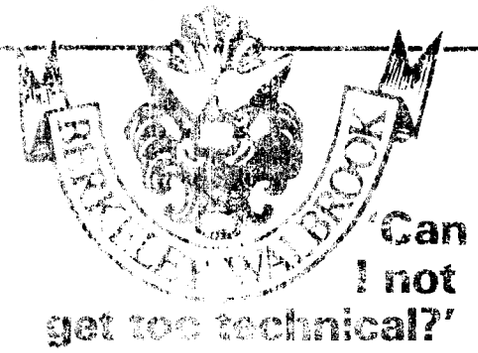
The salesman is doing two things: he is manipulating his client into a position where he has bought the idea of saving money. He then has to persuade him to part with a regular amount of money each month — they are told to aim for between five and ten per cent of gross monthly pay.

The client is sent away to think about it. He is not usually given a brochure to study or look at. He has to return to be signed up in two or three days' time, bringing with him his doctor's details and cheque book. If he fails to make the appointment, he will be bombarded with phone calls and the salesman will be permitted to make one of his rare sorties out of the office to pick up a cheque.

TWO MONTHS AGO it looked as if the whole BW empire was on the point of collapsing like a pack of cards. Following a row with his partner, Chris Efstratiou, Trevor Deaves and a group of other leading BW salesmen tried to break away from BW. Trevor Deaves approached the insurance company, Merchant Investors (where he once worked) with the idea that he should rejoin the company bringing with him around 100 BW salesmen.

The talks with Merchant Investors broke down in the end and a now very contrite Trevor Deaves is back playing a leading role at Berkeley-Walbrook. □

● *As the* New Statesman *offices are close to the Holborn branch of Berkeley-Walbrook, it was inevitable that sooner or later our staff would be contacted. The* NS*'s Peter Kellner was 'cold-called' recently by BW's Nigel Woolven, who described himself as a 'financial consultant'. Kellner agreed to meet Woolven at BW's offices a few days later. We secretly recorded their hour-long meeting, during which Woolven made a series of misleading and untruthful claims. These are some highlights from that exchange, with added comments in italics.*



Nigel Woolven: Berkeley-Walbrook are a very funny lot, there's no doubt about that at all. People who work here are a funny bunch. For example about a year-and-a-half ago I qualified as a chartered surveyor, got hacked off with doing that . . . and I came here for one reason, as all people here have done, which is to make some money for themselves; and I may as well be very blatant about that . . . If you invest your money in a certain sort of way, the Government will add back some of the tax that you've paid, a tax credit, which amounts to 18 per cent . . . If, for example, you invest a hundred pounds a month, the revenue will add that amount on top.

Comment: Woolven wrote down £118.18 on a piece of paper — a precise figure that recurred a number of times. It is wrong — not by much but enough to suggest that Woolven has little technical grasp of the subject. The true figure is £117.65. It was an elementary mistake no competent insurance salesman should make.

NW: Let me give you just one or two examples of the sorts of rates of return that you can get out of these things . . .

You've probably heard of Cornhill, they sponsor cricket matches. This is produced by Cornhill (*shows publicity brochure*). They take the period November 1974 to November 1980, and that managed fund has done 18.6 per cent a year . . . Here's a company called Trident Life. From August 1979 to August '80 they've done about 20 per cent . . . And that's a company called Albany Life, and they're 17.6 per cent in 1980.

PK: You don't have longer term figures?

NW: I don't, but you can get them.

Comment: Not so. The relevant figures are for ten years or more, as the tax advantages only apply fully for plans taken out for at least that long (a point Woolven omits to make). But the three schemes he is offering have all been in existence for less that ten years. So there are no figures to show how they compare with other companies over a full term.

PK: OK, suppose I put £100 a month into Albany Life. Now you're saying that it'll grow because of these tax benefits. Can you tell me how the charge system works?

NW: To be honest, at this stage, can I not get too technical on charges?

PK: Well, it seems to me relevant because you're saying the taxman gives me a lot of money, you show me that in great detail — £118.18 — you give a very exact figure. I want to know what is then knocked off at different scales so I know actually how much of my money is going into this fund. How much in the first year?

NW: It depends on the company.

PK: Tell me Albany Life.

NW: OK. I will get technical with you because you specifically asked me to. I don't like to get technical with people at this stage, because it's the principles. You've been trying to get by for 15 years. So far nothing substantial to show for it, therefore you ought to take some of your income and invest it. Now, by putting it in some of that, you buy those, and on your fifty quid a month you get a rate of return coming to about 15 to 20 per cent a year. Where the charges come in doesn't really matter.

PK: Are you saying that all companies in the end charge the same, only in a different form?

NW: Basically at the end of the day they're very, very similar.

PK: What about Equitable Life?

NW: Equitable? Well they don't operate this sort of savings scheme. They're very good at insurance, but they don't do unit-linked sort of investment plans.

Comment: A whole raft of false statements there, quite apart from the failure to answer the question about how much is actually invested. First, it is highly misleading to promise an annual rate of return of 15 to 20 per cent. Only a few companies have achieved this recently over the full ten-year span of a unit-linked policy, and they are mainly companies that don't sell policies through operations like Berkeley-Walbrook. And even then they were assisted a) by the stock market collapse of 1974-75, when shares were very cheap, and b) by higher tax relief than prevails today. Second, the different companies' charges are not *'very, very similar'. The deductions made by Albany Life, Cornhill and Trident Life are higher than many other companies — and therefore less of the policy-holder's money is invested. Third, Equitable Life* do *have a unit-linked policy (Pelican Units). It has one of the best performance records and lowest charge rates of any company.*

NW: Now, to take you briefly through the history of insurance companies: in days gone by, with-profits companies were the only ones around . . . and they gave you that sort of package there basically, in which part of the investment return is guaranteed to you — they sort of promise you 4½ to 5 per cent a year guaranteed plus possible reversionary bonuses. That was fine until a thing called inflation came along and they began to look fairly poor.

PK: But the FT share index now is the same as it was 12 years ago, and prices have trebled.

NW: God, knows, yes.

PK: So what's the benefit — what guarantee does one have that unit-linked policies will outperform with-profits policies, let alone inflation?

NW: Past performance. If you look in *Money Management*, I've got an article, take the value of £1000 invested in 1955, bank, building society, with-profits, unit-linked, etcetera; unit-linked way outperforms with-profits.

Comment: Woolven's comparison of with-profits with unit-linked policies is misleading. The 'promise' in a with-profits policy may only be of a 5 per cent return. But there is no promise of even that with a unit-linked policy. Share prices can go down as well as up (as all unit trust advertisements are required by law to state), and some unit-linked policies have ended up returning to investors less *money than they put in.*

Woolven is also wrong about the respected monthly magazine, Money Management. *It has never published an article comparing unit-linked schemes with others since 1955: indeed, it could not have done so even if it wished, for the first unit-linked scheme was not launched until 1957. What* Money Management *has done (December 1980 issue) is compare the best and the worst unit-linked and with-profits schemes over different ten-year periods in the 1960s and 1970s. It found that while the best unit-linked policies* usually *did better than the best with-profits policies, the worst unit-linked policies* always *did worse than the worst with-profits policies. And Berkeley-Walbrook don't sell the best unit-linked policies.*

Finally Woolven tried to sell a pure insurance (as opposed to insurance-cum-savings) policy:

NW: We have to select the term required. The onerous time as far as you're concerned is when your sprogs are dependent on you.

PK: About twenty years.

NW: Now a twenty-year term . . . This is a company called Phoenix Life. You'll do hard, very hard to better it . . . That's your gross annual premium (*writes down £136, giving insurance cover of £50,000*).

Comment: Phoenix Life's rates do compare favourably with many other companies; but it is nonsense to say that it's 'hard, very hard' to do better. The current Money Management *shows that Equitable Life generally provide the cheapest term insurance. I could have obtained an identical policy from them for £111 a year.* □

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COMMON AGRICULTURAL POLICY

No friend of poor farmers

This week the European Commission unveiled plans to 'reform' the CAP. In fact the changes will still leave intact a crazy system that does not even achieve its own aims — yet could land Britain with an extra £2 billion a year bill by the mid-1980s. BRIAN GARDNER reports

THE COMMON Agricultural Policy absorbs almost three quarters of the Community's £11.8 billion a year budget. Only radical reform can right the imbalance of budgetary benefit and burdens to individual member states.

The cause of the imbalance is brutally simple: if as a nation you produce more food than you consume and export the surplus, you will get back more from the EEC budget than you put in; if you consume more than you produce, you will pay out more than you get back. This is because the bulk of the EEC's cash is spent on either storing and degrading surplus food or dumping it on world markets (44 per cent of the CAP budget and 30 per cent of the total EEC budget is likely to have been spent on subsidised dumping in 1980). A further cause of the imbalance is that a significant proportion of EEC income arises from levies on food imported from non-EEC countries.

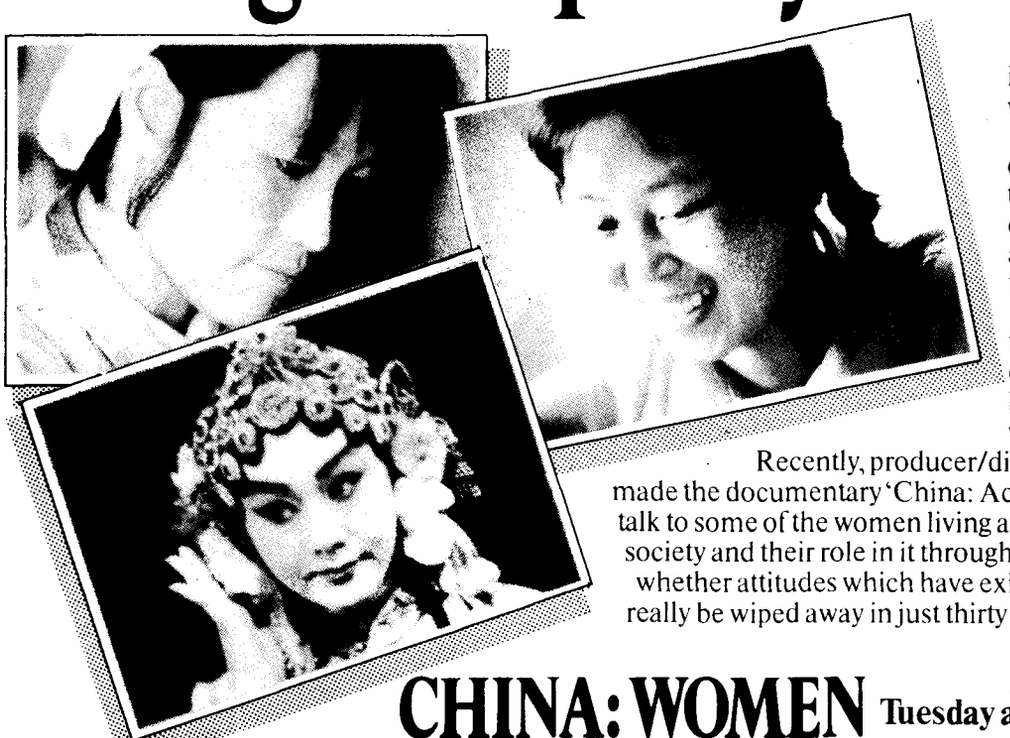
To cut spending on agriculture and therefore to have more money to spend on regional, social and industrial policies the EEC must put a stop to this open-ended subsidy system. The argument used most frequently to justify the whole wasteful edifice is that the CAP is necessary to support the incomes of Europe's many small farmers who would be destitute without it. According to the conventional wisdom, the whole panoply of EEC intervention payments, export subsidies and production subsidies on everything from butter to silk worms is necessary to support the incomes of Europe's 8 million people officially classified as farmers. Even accepting that farmers are entitled to more income support than steelmakers, coalminers, carmakers or transistor radio assemblers, it is the *method* of such support which is vitally important — both in term of efficiency in supporting incomes and in terms of cost to the taxpayer and consumer. In fact, real incomes of the small landholders in the less fertile regions of the Community have *declined* during the lifetime of the CAP, while those of the economically viable holdings have kept pace with industrial incomes; and incomes of the larger agribusinesses have surpassed average incomes.

WHY THIS failure of one of the CAP's basic aims? The EEC supports the farming industry by buying up 'surplus' grain, milk products, meat, sugar or fruit and vegetables so as to establish a minimum floor price below which no produce can be sold. Theoretically at least, this should guarantee the farmer a minimum selling price and therefore a minimum income. If, however, he keeps only five or ten cows or grows only a few hectares of wheat, rye or scrubby vineyard then it is obvious that his gain from this market-oriented income support system is going to be very small. If a farmer producing 1,000 tonnes of wheat a year receives a 10 per cent increase in his support price then his income at current prices is increased by £10,000; a farmer producing 10 tonnes will gain only £100.

The bulk of the money paid out of EEC funds for farm support goes to those who handle and process agricultural raw materials into the form in which food appears in the shops. With the exception of cereals, all products are bought up by the EEC's surplus buying operations — so-called 'intervention buying' — at the post-processing stage. The farmer who milks cows, rears beef cattle or grows sugar beet cannot actually sell those products to the EEC's intervention authorities.

The annual increase in EEC farm prices

On Tuesday we'll show you China through completely different eyes.



For over 2000 years the women in China were treated in ways which we would find hard to understand.

They were bought and sold like cattle. They were crippled through their feet being bound during childhood. They were forced into arranged marriages. And condemned to totally servile lives.

Then came the 1949 communist take-over, bringing with it complete equality for the sexes. But has it brought the freedom that the Chinese women had sought for so long?

Recently, producer/director Michael Whyte, who last year made the documentary 'China: Acrobats', returned to the country to talk to some of the women living and working there today, to see their society and their role in it through their own eyes, and to discover whether attitudes which have existed for generations can really be wiped away in just thirty short years.

CHINA: WOMEN Tuesday at 10.30 on ITV

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is in effect an increase in *food* prices involving increased guaranteed payments from the taxpayer and consumer to food processors — who pass on what they think fit to the farmer who provides them with raw materials. It is important to note that although the effect of these increases on farmers' prices is often uncertain, food prices at the retail level are always automatically increased. Processors and wholesalers clearly will not sell to the retailer at less than the EEC intervention price. Of the £7.5 billion paid out by the EEC's farm fund in 1980 more than 60 per cent is likely to have been paid out to the food processing industry rather than to farmers themselves.

The system is made more wasteful by the calculations on which price adjustments are based. The EEC Commission uses the average farm of 1975 as the criterion against which it measures the need for annual 'farm' price increases. This average includes every landholder from the three-cow peasant to the 1,000-cow agribusiness-man. The price setting process is supposed to compensate this mythical average farmer for cost increases to such an extent that he is able to maintain a comparable standard of living with his urban fellow citizens in his own region. The average holding on which the calculations are based is far too small and too inefficient to give a true picture of the income position of the 'non-peasant' farmers who now control the bulk of production in every sector. For example, annual adjustments of prices for the dairy sector (which absorbs more than a third of total support expenditure) are based on an average holding with 11 cows; but more than 60 per cent of the cows in the Community are milked in herds of at least 30 cows. Meanwhile, the person whom this whole paraphernalia is supposed to support — the 'small farmer' — becomes progressively poorer.

The CAP pays out only when agricultural raw materials and food products are moved around; the bulk of expenditure goes on intervention payments, export subsidies, monetary compensatory amounts, processing subsidies and compensations to traders and processors. To do almost anything with a food product — other than for it to be consumed at the farm gate — someone, somewhere has to have a subsidy from Brussels. And what applies to individual food traders applies to food exporting countries. If a French dairy company sells butter to Russia, not only does the French balance of payments benefit from this transaction in the normal way, but the company draws a subsidy from Brussels of at least £700 for each tonne of that butter.

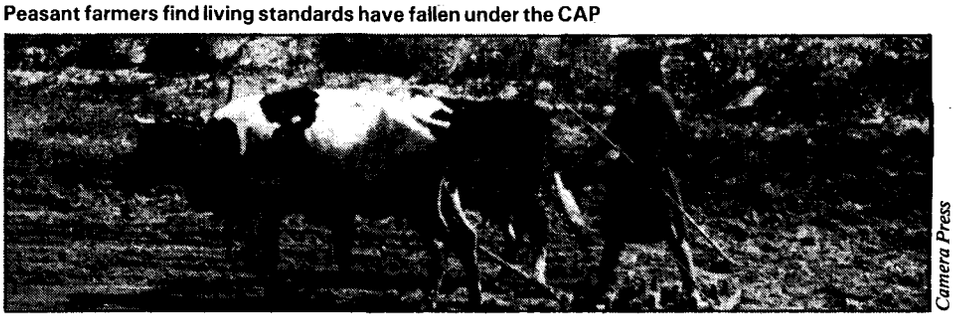
France's gains in these sorts of subsidies are greater than its contribution to the EEC budget contribution in import levies and VAT contributions. Britain's situation is exactly the opposite: producing only about 70 per cent of its temperate food consumption, it imports from the EEC and elsewhere, yet exports very few EEC subsidy-attracting agricultural products to countries outside the Community. Thus, the CAP greases the wheels of agricultural trade and ensures that food-importing nations subsidise mightily the agricultural trade of major food exporters like France, the Benelux, Ireland and Denmark.

CLEARLY, it should be Lord Carrington's task during the British Presidency of the Council of Ministers to ensure that the undoubted 'social problem' of the Community's rural areas is separated from the CAP and dealt with through regional and social policy measures. The agriculture policy should then be adjusted to take account of two factors: first, the transition of European agriculture from peasant landholding to modern agribusiness; and, second, the fact that agricultural productivity will continue to soar well into the 1980s. If French and Irish milk yields increase at their present rate every year up to 1985 then the cost of the dairy sector alone will have trebled by that time from its present level of £3.5 billion a year. Milk yields in those countries, he might note, are currently only 60 per cent of the Community average, which is itself increasing by three per cent a year. These productivity increases are very similar in all the main production sectors.

Any CAP reform measures based on nebulous concepts such as 'price restraint' or 'aligning EEC support prices on world prices', as currently recommended by the EEC Commission, will lead to financial disaster, unless combined with measures which actually limit the Community's financial responsibility for further surpluses. Because of the EEC agricultural industry's productivity reserves, price reductions will not stem the continued flood of surplus production and may even provoke further large increases.

Lord Carrington should eschew all fatuous excuses for the CAP remaining in its present form — for example, that it is cheap to run. It is not. At a taxation cost of more than 120 US dollars per citizen per annum it compares badly with the average of $11 paid in the US, $17 in Australia and $24 in New Zealand. On top of this, the EEC consumer pays 40 per cent more than consumers in these other countries for the important basic, temperate foods.

Peasant farmers find living standards have fallen under the CAP



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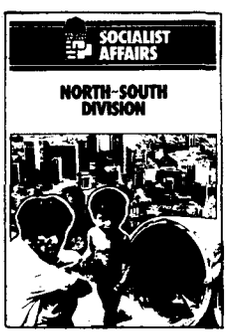

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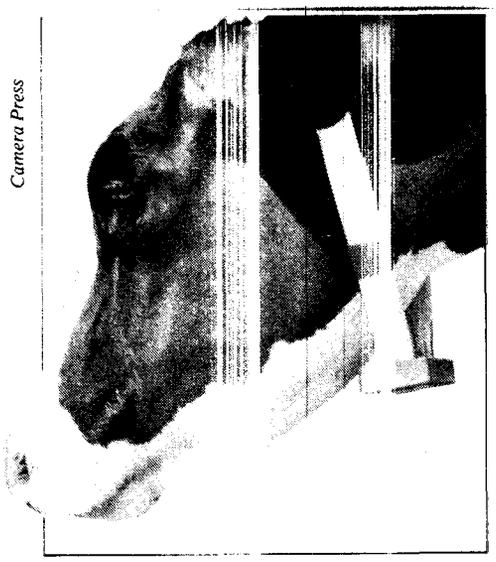

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The microchip cow: a technological investment that is worthwhile for the 1000-cow agribusiness farmer, benefitting from the CAP.

Although there has been a significant price rise on international food markets during the last 18 months, for only one commodity, sugar, has this been sufficient to make large subsidies for dumping EEC surpluses unnecessary. In fact, all that this temporary respite has done is to make dumping cheaper. Current trends indicate that the world markets in cereals and dairy products will revert to their normal state of surplus after the 1981 harvest. EEC export subsidies will again, therefore, return to their normal average of 40 to 50 per cent of the EEC price.

Apologists for the CAP claim that the EEC's surplus food 'mountains' have diminished into molehills; what they do not admit, however, is that the amount which EEC consumers do not consume is greater than it has ever been. Take butter: the community currently produces approximately 400,000 tonnes — 25 per cent — more butter than EEC consumers will buy. This represents twice the excess output of 1973 when Britain joined the EEC and, if present policies remain unchanged, it could increase to 1 billion tonnes by 1985. The surplus has had to be exported, and because the EEC price is so much higher than the international price, most of it has had to have a subsidy of at least £900 a tonne.

As for arguments that the CAP is an important contributor to food aid and international food security, it should be borne in mind that malnutrition and starvation are now caused more by the inadequacy of the international distribution system, than by inadequate production. The Community could utilise its resources more efficiently by buying grain from low cost producers, available on the world market, than by fostering over-production of high-priced grain by its own farmers.

It is vital that the CAP be significantly changed now, before international markets revert to normal and the impetus of continued and almost automatic productivity growth pushes CAP expediture even higher than in the worst years of the late 1970s.

If nothing is done to control production or expenditure (preferably both), then the cost of the CAP could easily double by 1985. For Britain, this would mean an EEC net budget payment not of £1.6 billion — as it would have been in 1980, unabated by Thatcher's deal — but nearer £3.5 billion. □

IRAQ

Coup may topple Saddam

HELENA COBBAN analyses the forces which make up the new opposition front

IRAQI PRESIDENT Saddam Hussein must be totting up the political costs of Israel's recent attack. In the words of one non-official Iraqi political analyst: 'If the regime cannot protect its Number One installation, what can it protect?' Opposition to Saddam is already mounting, with news of a crucial new opposition alliance being formed. The enormous economic and social effects of the war with Iran are coming home to roost, uneasily close to Saddam's lush palace on the banks of the Tigris. And Western strategic analysts are carefully watching developments in this country which, alone among the Arab states in the area, has the human and economic resources to become an effective regional power.

Such anyway has been the dream of the youthful and ambitious President since he first tasted power as protégé of the former Baathist President Ahmed Hassan al-Bakr, who seized power in 1968. Saddam deposed his mentor in a palace coup in mid-1979, but General Bakr has been retained in a public role of 'father-figure' to the new President. The General's implicit seal of approval is important for Saddam's regime, as he has always had his power-base in the weighty military wing of the Baath Party, while Saddam rose to power through its tightly conspiratorial civilian wing.

In the coming weeks, Saddam will be searching for an internal scapegoat for his humiliation at the hands of the Israelis, especially now that the option of counter-attacking some Israeli interests appears to have been foregone. He may seek one in the military, already locked in long dispute with the President over the conduct of the Gulf War. Iraqi opposition sources point to previous disgraces, such as the Iranian bombing of the military airfield at H-3. Four chief radar operators at the base were executed after the bombing, despite the fact that conditions in the Iraqi air force have so deteriorated that there could have been no effective defence anyway.

The scale of the latest humiliation would apparently call for a purge. But the military may be in no condition to take any more punishment. Opposition sources put the number of Iraqis so far killed and disabled in the Gulf War at a staggering 50,000; the official media's own news that over 2,000 plots of land have been distributed to families of 'martyrs' in one province alone suggests that the estimate is correct. Such losses, and the frustration of being unable to beat back even Iran's muddled armies, must have a huge impact on an army which numbers half a million in a society numbering only 13 million.

IRAQI SOCIETY is made up of three distinct communities. Saddam and most of his top party allies come from the thin strip across the middle of the country where Arabs of the Sunni muslim sect predominate. To the north are fellow-Sunnis of the Kurdish nation, which has been locked in intermittent rebellion against Baghdad since the foundation of modern Iraq after the Great War. To the south are ethnic-Arab Shi-ites, for whom the appeal of co-religionists across the Iranian border is often stronger than the appeal of brother Arabs in Baghdad. The Shi-ites form a clear majority of Iraq's total population, and the Kurds in their mountain strongholds a further 15 per cent. These two opposition groupings may now unite with the tough veterans of the Iraqi Communist Party to form a country-wide front against the regime.

Opposition sources in exile say that a previous opposition front, based in Damascus, united pro-Syrian Baathist and Kurdish groups, together with the CP and the newly radical Kurdish Democratic Party (inherited by young anti-imperialist Masood Barzani from his late father, the famed CIA collaborator Mullah Mustafa). But that front has now crumbled, and the KDP and the Communists are hoping for an alliance with the Shi-ites' Daawa Party.

Daawa sources previously held that they would resist any collaboration with 'the Godless Communists', but there are now reports that they are reconsidering. The Communists have even produced verses from the Koran which would sanction an alliance with them. An alliance spanning the KDP, the Communists and Daawa would present a huge new threat to the regime, which has previously been able to play the different groups off against each other. It could also seriously threaten US interests in the region.

Thousands of Shi-ite army conscripts have reportedly deserted along the southern front with Iran, while in the north 400 soldiers deserted as recently as May to the Kurdish forces, after debilitating battles near Al-Qosh and Suleimaniyah. Opposition sources report that vast areas of Kurdistan are under *de facto* rebel control. All this may be enough to persuade top Army commanders that the time has come to withdraw support from Saddam, which in Iraqi terms means to topple him. Iraqi oppositionists say that this might coincide with the Americans' own plans, with the Americans perhaps keen to save what they can of the regime without leaving such a move too late, as in the case of the Shah. □

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The mullahs close in

FRED HALLIDAY reports on the fall of Bani-Sadr

THE CONFLICT between President Bani-Sadr and his opponents in the Islamic Republican Party was about one elementary issue: power in post-revolutionary Iran, and what has, until now, been the key to that power — the ear of Ayatollah Khomeini.

The conflict had an ideological aspect too: it was a dispute about what kind of Islamic Republic should be created, and in particular about the role of the clergy. The thousands of mullahs who now run the Islamic Republican Party and the local committees want to see their position confirmed in advance of the inevitable departure of Khomeini from the scene. Bani-Sadr, while a devout Muslim and a somewhat credulous supporter of the idea that a socio-economic programme could be derived from Muslim principles, nonetheless opposed the clergy, regarding them as ignorant and liable to discredit his religion.

The social dimensions of the clash were more complex. The mullahs have been able to mobilise large numbers of urban poor against the secular forces and against those who want Islam without clerical domination. The ethnic minorities, secular parties, educated youth, middle classes and foreign educated intelligentsia have all been attacked in the name of this popular Islam. Yet in material terms the mullahs have offered nothing to the poor, whose standard of living has continued to fall since the revolution.

The clergy have shown that they understand how to seize and maintain power. Mullahs have been assigned to key positions in the ministries and in the armed forces. A massive armed following of up to 100,000, paid by the mullahs, has been composed from unemployed youth. The militias of the local committees, and the armed Islamic Guards have now been joined by a third force, the *Basij,* or 'mobilisation'. Originally formed in the days of the hostage crisis, to ward off an American invasion, this is now under the control of the Islamic Republican Party.

The mullahs go to war

AP

The IRP controls the main instruments of central power in Tehran: the Majlis or Parliament has an IRP majority. The mullahs also control the judiciary and the law. One issue that brought the crisis to a head in recent weeks was the decision to push through the Law of Qasas or Retribution. This will institute the punishment of an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth.

In a country where at most 30 per cent of the population can read, enormous political power attaches to those who control the media: here again the mullahs have made no mistake. Bani-Sadr's views were systematically excluded from broadcasts, and the programmes of recent weeks have hammered away at themes which still have a considerable resonance in the population: the struggle of the true Muslims against false believers, western agents, 'spreaders of corruption on earth', those who 'wage war on God'.

The centre of power, however, remains with the Ayatollah Khomeini. What tipped the balance in this latest conflict was his decision to come out openly against Bani-Sadr, dismissing him from his position as head of the army and calling on him openly to repent. Bani-Sadr's biggest problem has always been Khomeini: even if he wanted to, he knew that he could not openly defy the Ayatollah, without giving his enemies in the IRP the excuse they needed to launch their attack.

Khomeini's grandson has now openly stated that the Ayatollah is a prisoner of the IRP, and Bani-Sadr has accused Khomeini's advisers of feeding false information to the old man. But whatever the precise course of their relationship it seems now impossible that any reconciliation could be brought about. Indeed Khominei has taken the occasion to launch his most open attack yet on the secular nationalists, who draw their inspirations from Mohammad Mossadeq, the premier ousted in 1953. One of the most striking features of the ideology of the Islamic regime is that unlike almost all other third world governments it does not invoke a nationalist history: the politicians who in past decades opposed the Shah are, if anything, an obstacle to the establishment of a new religious orthodoxy.

THE IMPOSITION of full IRP control will not be possible without considerable bloodshed. Bani-Sadr commands a considerable following. The major organisation of the opposition are the radical Islamic Mojahidin of the People. They have been underground for some months, and have made increasingly strong attacks on the arbitrary arrests, torture and censorship of the regime. They have tens of thousands of supporters under arms, and on 19 June they openly called for an armed struggle against what they termed the 'fascism' of the IRP.

The Mojahidin are especially strong in the provinces bordering the Caspian Sea and in the southern town of Shiraz, to which the refugees from the war with Iraq have tended to flee. Their main slogan is an Islamic one, 'Victory is from God, and triumph is near': ironically, this was one of the rallying cries of the movement against the Shah. While followers of the IRP have been taking to the roofs to shout 'God is Great' Mojahidin have been shouting 'Death to the party', i.e. the IRP, and 'Death to this Deceitful Government'.

AP

Bani-Sadr: lost Khomeini's ear

It is difficult to see how the Mojahidin can prevail over the armed followers of the IRP. The regime has the money to pay its militia, and has shown itself quite willing to imprison and execute on a wide scale. The IRP accuses Bani-Sadr of being a new Pinochet; but it is they who fill the Ajmadieh football stadium in central Tehran with prisoners. The 15 people shot on the morning of 20 June after demonstrations the previous day had all been in prison for some time. Their execution was a means of terrorising the population. One of those who died was a prominent poet, long imprisoned by the Shah, Said Sultanpur.

The secular Left has grown substantially since the revolution, in which it played a secondary role. But it has been grievously divided and unable to form a cogent force in Iranian politics. The Mojahidin and Bani-Sadr have been supported by twenty-four other groups, including two prominent 'Marxist-Leninist' formations and the National Front. But they do not yet command a mass following to rival that of the IRP.

A significant portion of the Left also supports Khomeini. The pro-Soviet Tudeh Party believes that the Ayatollah is, on balance, 'anti-Imperialist' and that the regime will have no option but to adopt a socialist-orientated path of development. A majority of the once-powerful Fedayin guerrillas also remain unopposed to the IRP.

The only force capable of restoring Bani-Sadr to power is the army: but they have no unified command and have been badly demoralised by the purges of the last two years. Bani-Sadr's main link to the army, Mostafa Chamran, was mysteriously killed last Sunday. They are also fighting the war with Iraq, which, although quiet for some months, could flare at any time. Reports from Tehran indicate that the police and part of the air force have come out in support of Bani-Sadr: but it would appear that, at least for the time being, the IRP has been successful in its bid for full power. □

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RACISM

No home for Asian family

Denning leaves immigrants homeless, reports ANDREW ARDEN

THE COURT OF APPEAL has turned down an application from a Bangladeshi man, Mr Taffazul Islam, to be housed by Hillingdon borough council under the provisions of the 1977 Housing (Homeless Persons) Act. Mr Islam was found to have made himself 'intentionally homeless' by the act of bringing his wife and four children to live with him in this country, where they could not be accommodated in the room he had occupied before their arrival. The ruling seriously undermines the 1977 Act and has deeply racist implications.

Mr Islam has lived and worked in Hillingdon since 1965. He married a woman in Bangladesh on a visit there in 1968 and, on his subsequent visits, she conceived four children. They lived with his parents in Bangladesh. In 1974 he applied for an entry certificate for them; this was not granted until 1980. It had to be used within six months, or else it would lapse and the family would have to return to the back of the queue.

Mr Islam had lived in a shared room in Hillingdon. He arranged with his landlord that when his family arrived he would have an additional room in the house, making one and a half rooms in all. On their arrival the landlord changed his mind — and at that point Mr Islam applied to the local authority.

To qualify for permanent assistance under the 1977 Act, a person must be in 'priority' need and must not have become 'intentionally homeless'. Hillingdon argued that Mr Islam had become 'intentionally homeless' by bringing his family to this country without ensuring that they had permanent accommodation to go to. This formulation was based on a judgment by Lord Denning in another case, concerning two Italian families who had uprooted themselves to come to England in search of work, without arranging accommodation in advance. The High Court held, on this basis, that Mr Islam had indeed become 'intentionally homeless'.

In fact, the 1977 Act defines this pejorative term quite tightly: first, the person must have given up accommodation; secondly, the accommodation must have been available for occupation at the time the person abandoned it; and thirdly, it must have been reasonable for him (or her) to remain there.

The case went to the Appeal Court, where it was argued that whereas the Italian families had fallen foul of this definition Mr Islam had not. According to the Act, accommodation is 'available' only if it is available to the applicant *and* all members of his family with whom he might reasonably be expected to live. The room Mr Islam had left was not available (in the statutory sense) to his family, and the house in Bangladesh was clearly not available to him.

Hillingdon countered this with the (admittedly artificial) proposition that Mr Islam could be treated as though he had been in occupation — through his family — of the house in Bangladesh. Seizing upon this, Lord Denning upheld the finding of 'intentional homelessness' and dismissed Mr Islam's appeal. He went further, to rule that there could be a finding of 'intentional homelessness' if *either* the applicant *or* his family had given up accommodation available for their occupation. A woman, he said, was a member of her husband's family. Her actions could be deemed his actions, and if either one became intentionally homeless, the other must be treated as such too.

For once, Lord Denning did not carry with him the whole of his court. Lord Justice Ackner, although reluctant to give the Islam family priority in housing, broadly accepted their argument. Sir Denys Buckley agreed with the result of Lord Denning's ruling but dissented from the proposition that Mr Islam could be treated as though he had occupied the house in Bangladesh. He gave two alternative reasons for upholding Hillingdon's finding. The first seemed to amount to the proposition that Mr Islam's action in bringing his family to Britain had made his own accommodation (the shared room) unavailable to him and his family, and he could therefore be treated as having left 'available' accommodation. The implication is serious. For example, if a young couple share a single room and have a baby, they may have to leave. Before this case, no-one would have said that they had become 'intentionally homeless' by having a child; now it seems possible to argue that they had. Sir Denys Buckley's second reason for dismissing the appeal was that the 'available' accommodation which the Islams had left, as a family, comprised their rooms in Bangladesh, *plus* the shared room in Hillingdon! The moral of the story, Lord Denning declared, was that men from overseas should not bring their families to join them until they had found suitable accommodation for them.

It is true that people who settled in Britain *after* the 1971 Immigration Act came into force and who want their families to join them must show that there is accommodation available to them. But Mr Islam settled here *before* the Act came into force. He was therefore legally entitled to bring his family here without first finding them a home. In effect, this judgment makes all pre-1971 immigrants subject to conditions from which they are specifically exempted by the rules made under the 1971 Act. Leave was granted to appeal to the House of Lords. But it seems there are no lengths to which the courts will not go to avoid the effects of legislation they dislike. □

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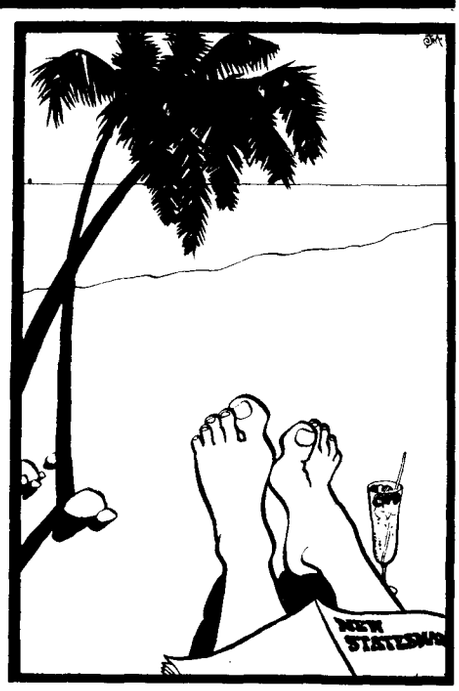

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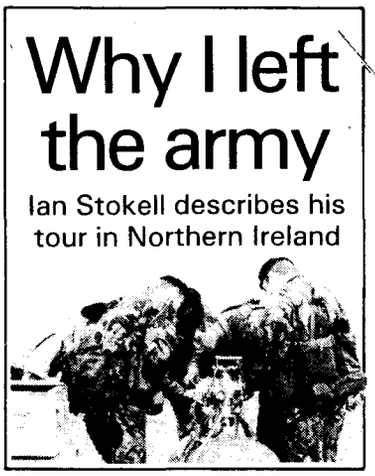
Why I left the army

Ian Stokell describes his tour in Northern Ireland



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Derek Speirs (Report)

Learning to be a soldier. Laugh? We nearly cried.

At seventeen years old, I found the image of the army offered by the advertising campaigns — excitement, travel, adventure — too hard to resist. I believed the adverts and volunteered for nine years.

A year's experience of disorganisation and unnecessary bureaucracy (which included a five-month tour of Belize) encouraged a vastly different attitude. Enthusiasm gave way to a cynicism of the system, and a dislike for the suppression of individuality and opinions contrary to military policy. After a little over two years, the inevitable four-month tour in Northern Ireland occurred. I went to Ulster with an open mind, determined to view each problem from both sides, to form an unbiased opinion of the war. I justified my inclusion in the conflict by saying that no-one has the right to criticise the situation without experiencing it first hand.

Of the tens of thousands of men to have been sent to Northern Ireland in a British army uniform, many thousands have been classed as 'search trained'. What this means is that they are capable of wandering aimlessly in fields; trudging through wet, muddy woodland; avoiding falling masonry in derelict buildings; causing falling masonry in derelict buildings; and in general annoying everyone they stumble across.

A few select thousands, however, come under the category of 'Specialist Search Team'. Specialist, not through any proficiency at the job in hand, but because they are members of the Royal Engineers. This qualifies them for an extra few days at a training camp to experience 'life-like' conditions. These situations include: learning not to undo the shock-absorbers when searching a car boot; how to wave a car to a halt at a road-block; how to fall asleep in classrooms; how to stand on a pressure-pad without avoiding death; how to trip over a trip-wire in a derelict house; and in general, how to be doubly annoying to whomever they can find.

The very first time we were actively employed (the day after we arrived, I believe) was to search a dozen fields around a little village in the middle of the countryside. We were told it was a task everyone was given to get them settled in.

In any search, the infantry supply a cordon of soldiers to, in theory, protect those of us grovelling about in the hedgerows. On this occasion they also gave us detailed maps of the fields we were about to search. So detailed, in fact, that for 90 per cent of the time, nobody had the slightest idea what was going on. One field was searched 20 times and the rest escaped untouched. One of the young soldiers on the cordon was given an enthusiastic welcome by a group of youths, expressed in the form of assorted bricks and stones, and culminating in a direct hit on the bridge of his nose. *Result:* one very blood-spattered face, a suspected broken nose, one somewhat grieving soldier. *Conclusion:* Welcome to Northern Ireland.

Accidents, of course, are commonplace among the security forces. They range from the tragic — shooting a fellow soldier in the face with a 9mm automatic — to the comical. The latter, totally unexpected, made day-to-day life a little more bearable.

The outer courtyard of the army base was full of camouflage suits and rucksacks. One quick panoramic view would reveal all manner of trees and bushes, from oak to holly, involved in deep conversation on the merits of homemade fertilizers and whether it was a good idea to use a rose bush as a disguise.

Phil weaved his way through the forest to the loading-bay (a small sandpit where everyone using a weapon must go to load and unload: the weapon is pointed at the sand during the process to minimise the risk of accident). The dark camouflage cream which smothered his face made him look more like an extra on a Lilt advert than a highly-trained professional. Finally he reached the loading-bay and slipped a magazine out of his pocket to load onto his rifle. An easy task you may think. But for Phil, it involved unspecified amounts of technical knowledge, of which he was almost totally devoid. The bottom of his magazine caught on something as it came out of his pocket, and dropped off.

Now when a magazine is fully loaded, the spring inside at the base is so compressed that, as each round is fired, it pushes the rest up the magazine ready for the next shot. So you can imagine what happens when the bottom of a fully-loaded magazine decides to drop off.

That spring left the bottom of the magazine quicker than a miner's pay-claim. It travelled around that courtyard the speed of a Young Socialist Worker on his payday. Twenty 7.62mm rounds disappeared into the far corners of the courtyard, sending oak trees and elm trees scurrying for cover behind their concrete brothers. I don't think I have ever seen a blackened face become radiant so fast. There stood Phil, staring quite speechless at the empty magazine in his grubby little hand, surrounded by prostrate vegetation. Laughed? I nearly cried.

There is nothing quite so dramatic as a patrol of face-blackened soldiers crouching at the edge of a helicopter pad, waiting for the sliding doors of a large Wessex helicopter to open. Then, on a signal from one of the aircrew, these negatives, laden with equipment, scamper to the whirling monster to be whisked away into the sunset at high speed. All very Errol Flynn and romantic.

We stood on the edge of the pad, coiled cobras ready to spring; a Westward Television team was filming us from the other end of the pad. The signal. We hurled ourselves towards the waiting monster. The first of us leapt aboard. Then the second. Then Neil. But as he stepped up on to the platform, a pocket flew open, spewing Ever-Ready batteries in all directions. Panic. The helicopter could never take off while they were loose. There we were, still being filmed, rushing around the pad chasing batteries. We never made it on to television.

Travel in the border areas is by helicopter only, but we did use Landrovers a lot elsewhere. All vehicles must travel in twos at least and I made a point of never travelling in the rear vehicle. In Northern Ireland, some people have a particular way of welcoming anyone who is passing them in a vehicle, wearing a green uniform. They seem to favour offerings of value, usually forms of building material, which can range from a piece of wood to a length of lead pipe. But in most cases it consists of house bricks. By the time those that wish to make the offering have sighted the gnome-like figures, the first of the Landrovers has passed without incident. Only the second vehicle is left to accept the offering with a chorus of grateful acceptance speeches.

When we arrived in Ireland, it was suggested that if the vehicle had to stop, the person sitting in the back should alight and wander around until they were ready to continue. Two weeks later, we were driving back to our home base through the city centre and I found myself in the second Landrover. Phil was driving. We had to make a stop at a set of traffic lights. Not wanting to appear uninterested, I alighted. I was standing with my back to the Landrover, looking back down the high street.

The lights changed. Phil, paying attention to everything around him as usual, selected first gear and decided on a Le Mans style

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start. Realising, with uncharacteristic speed, that I was about to be left behind, I launched myself at the fast disappearing vehicle. By an incredible piece of good luck, I managed to grab hold of one of the roll-bars without dropping my rifle. Exit Landrover, burning rubber with dangling accessory. After a quick serialisation of my life flashing before my eyes, I concluded this party trick by falling in a heap on the floor of the said vehicle. During transit ever after, you would not have prised me loose from my seat with a crowbar.

Generally, though, life for us in Northern Ireland, however potentially dangerous, was cocooned within a cordon of infantrymen. Only rarely did we come into contact with the horror of war. Usually, if we were called in at all, it was long after the broken bodies had been removed. Then, the only indication of the senseless carnage that had disturbed the peaceful countryside was a small crater and the pools of blood on the pavement.

But always the same thought lingered on. That it was such a young, wasted life, no matter what uniform or creed. Death does not distinguish between race or religion but accepts any life that may be offered its way. And always the realisation that those who are willing to kill, on both sides, are not always content with death. They must injure and maim.

Above all others, I remember a fire-bomb attack that claimed a young soldier. An old car parked in a side-street. Only the cracked pavement separating it from a high wall. Inside the car, an explosive charge strapped to one side of a plastic petrol container. As the charge ignited, the blast would be directed towards the wall. As the young soldier walked in between the car and the wall, the explosive charge went off. It sent a sheet of flame towards the wall, catching the soldier in its path. Only the quick action of his fellow patrol members saved the man's life. They picked him up and burst into the nearest house, up the stairs and promptly immersed him in a bath of cold water. As they tried to gently remove the charred remains of his clothing, the top layers of skin came off as well.

The true horror was not just the attack itself, but the desire to burn, so that death would be slow and painful, and life little better.

That is why it is so much easier to recall only the things that left one amused, that imprinted laughter on the memory, not horror. The little things. Like heaping spoonfuls of salt onto your cornflakes in the morning instead of sugar; Neil dropping his rifle onto someone's head as he boarded a helicopter.

I will always feel for, and care about, *all* the people involved. But in the years to come, it shall never be the horror that I remember.

Upon my return to the mainland, I wrote twice to my MP. The first letter contained my view of the army itself. The second concerned my personal opinion of the conflict in Ulster: that the British troops on the streets were acting as a catalyst for violence.

Some nine months after my return from Northern Ireland, I managed to purchase my discharge from the armed forces. □

All in the past

Arthur Marshall

AS I NOW, with eyesight not at all as sharp as it once was and I must really switch to more powerful gig-lamps, invariably misread the word Liberian, I get a number of violent shocks from the newspapers (EIGHT LIBRARIANS SENTENCED TO DEATH FOR GOVERNMENT PLOT) and sadly picture to myself the consternation in Cheltenham's literary circles ('I hear they've executed that nice Miss Merridew') and the grey, tear-drenched faces in Sidcup ('*Poor* little Miss Ponsonby! She used to sit on the latest Cartland for me'). But what sort of plot? How good are librarians at tunnelling and depositing tubs of gunpowder ('Now, where are those Swan Vestas?')? There are, of course, and not a million miles from here, people misguided enough to think that Mrs Thatcher and her government will in the end manage to blow themselves satisfactorily up without anybody resorting to explosives.

To distract my mind from this unpleasant thought, I turn to matters of a more soothing nature which in my case often means the theatre. The late, alas, Hugh Beaumont, affectionately known up and down Shaftesbury Avenue as 'Binkie', managing director of the hugely successful theatrical firm of H.M. Tennent Ltd and a name to conjure with in the more reputable *coulisses*, was of course accustomed, when putting on a play, to give very careful consideration to the author's choice of title for it (titles are for ever being changed prior to production. *Oklahoma* nearly saw the light as *Away We Go.*). Would the title sound cheerful and draw people into the theatre (*Love in Idleness* and *Blithe Spirit*)? Did it seem dramatic and exciting (*Watch on the Rhine* and *Flare Path*)? Was it obviously a jolly comedy (*While the Sun Shines* and *George and Margaret*)? Was it something with, perhaps, a message or which 'gave you something to think about' (*The Gleam* and *Deep Are The Roots*)? All such titles attract or interest or tease the public, with beneficial results at the box-office ('I'll just nip into Keith Prowse, dear, on my way to Barkers'). And above all there was the immensely merry type of play, with a title to suit it (*Traveller's Joy* and *The Happiest Days of Your Life*) that, in Binkie's own words, 'would be just the thing for Felicity's 21st.'

He used, with happy memories of the 30s when theatre-going was at a peak of popularity and within the financial reach of most, though I well recall the dismay and sense of outrage when Cochran put the price of his best stall seats up to 14/6, to picture a middle-class family, the Plenderleys, living in, let us say, Barnet, with a bank manager Dad, a cosy and capable Mum (president of the W.I.), and three splendid children —two boys, Bill and Tom, both doing well ('The Head's made Bill a pre'') at, as it might be, Felsted, and the eldest child, Felicity ('She's got her mother's lovely colouring'), just finishing her three-year domestic science and housewifery course. She is shortly to be 21, has a steady admirer met at the tennis-club ('Jim's in jute. The entire Bradshaw family has always been in jute'), and on the great day Mr Plenderley is going to splash lavishly out, the evening being excitedly referred to by everybody as 'our binge'. There is to be a hired car (Daimler's used to provide them for an astonishingly low cost), a box at the theatre and then a slap-up supper at either the Troc or the Cri (it was the days before waiters started to look glum and discouraged at about 10.15 p.m.). And the happy preparations include, naturally, a very careful examination of the theatre list to pin down what would be the absolutely perfect thing to see ('They do say that *This Way To The Tomb* is awfully good, but I *don't* quite think, do you . . ?') And the chances are that in the end they go happily off to an entertainment with an engaging Tennent title (*Grand National Night* or *Seagulls Over Sorrento*), and a lovely and rewarding time is had by all. ('We all simply screamed!')

Everybody tells me that the musical play currently at Drury Lane is admirable in every possible way and not in the very least what used to be called (when people minded about such matters) 'offensive', and so one wishes it nothing but well but it is an American importation and has been a very big hit on Broadway and I do so wonder whether anybody saw fit to warn the people concerned with putting it on that, even in our fairly enlightened times, the word 'whorehouse' in the title would, in London, keep a very large number of people out of the theatre, particularly Drury Lane, a house with traditions and considered by many to be more national than the National. However unoffended they might be when they got there, many will take fright at the title. The Plenderleys, first cousins to Rattigan's theatre-going Aunt Edna, still exist and although they cannot now afford to take a box (and who indeed can?), they go to the theatre when they are able and managers ignore their feelings and sensitivity at their peril. Felicity's 21st is now Tracy's 21st but *plus ça change. . .* The Drury Lane management might well complain that to change the title and retain the show as it is would be pure hypocrisy, and they would be quite correct, but it is sad but true that there has always been money in hypocrisy and rather less in honesty.

There is a theatrical maxim that you must always be kind and nice to everybody on the way up as you will be meeting them all again on your way down but for Binkie there was, happily, no way down and the list of Tennent successes leaves one, yet another first cousin to Aunt Edna, gasping, and grateful. Goodness gracious me, the memories . . . Margaret Rutherford as Madame Arcati, throwing off that cape and greedily seizing food ('What's in those sandwiches?'): that moment in *Quadrille* when the Lunts, together at last, came sweeping in: the wonderful visual trickeries of *Ring Round The Moon* and the haunting music that accompanied them: the endless pleasures of the Coward revue *Sigh No More:* the superb dresses and decor of the Beaton *Lady Windermere's Fan:* and so on and so forth. Well, it was lovely while it lasted. □

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Diary

BRUCE PAGE

■ *The Times,* to the chagrin of its staff, appears certain to secure Dr Henry Kissinger as a columnist. The scheme under negotiation involves *The Times* buying world rights to an 800-word weekly offering, to be flogged off, after processing, to newspapers around the globe. Predictions are being made that Times Newspapers could still turn a profit while paying Kissinger $300,000 or more a year.

Some plausibility is lent to this scheme by the presence in Printing House Square of Harry Evans — known to the world as Editor of *The Times,* but known to the trade as the only text-surgeon capable of grafting vitality's simulacrum onto the little doctor's charnel-house prose. The partnership, should it come off, will be perhaps the most formidable achievement in that line since 'Boom' Trenchard, the Neanderthal who gave birth to strategic bombing, was dressed up in civilisation's literary appearances by the poetaster Maurice Baring. Students of Kissinger's Indochina campaigns may find some irony in the comparison.

■ Rupert Murdoch, *The Times*'s new proprietor, is introducing some organisational novelties of his own. As entertainment, the most promising is his decision to set up a joint New York editorial facility for all his non-US papers — the *Australian,* the Sydney *Daily Mirror,* the *Sun,* the *News of the World, The Times,* the *Sunday Times,* and what have you. Economies within the empire are doubtless mandatory, because the *Sun*'s vast earnings are now being consumed in the 'bingo war' at the tabloid end of the market. (Subsidised cover-price, plus handouts for victory in imbecile gambling games, is the method the *Sun* has chosen to combat the raunchy challenge of the *Star*: nothing quite so lethal has been seen since the circulation wars of the Thirties.)

All the same, there could be a few impracticalities in this kind of combined operation. (UNSURE ORIGIN OF INQUIRY RE KISSINGER BOOBS. PLEASE ADVISE.) An executive who expressed mild scepticism was fired over open telex — and was sold, when he drew successful, vehement attention to the NUJ's agreements about compensation, that it was caddish for management to 'shelter behind a union'. The person elected to operate the bureau is Mike Hamlyn, formerly night editor of *The Times:* until they merge *Private Eye* with the *Church Times* there will be nobody in the game with more role conflicts to his name.

So Lonrho get the *Observer*. With the *Times/News of the Screws* groups locked into Murdoch's empire (tabloids, gaming, TV, airlines) and the *Mail, Mirror, Express* and *FT* operations controlled by conglomerates, this seems to leave the *New Statesman*, the *Daily Telegraph* and *Private Eye* running nationally-distributed newspapers as independent businesses (the *Guardian* being a marginal case). This is called The Freedom of the Press.

■ On Monday, narrative excitement enlivened my dutiful study of the *Guardian*. Richard Gott, *Agenda*'s impresario, student of revolutions, gave an inside account of last weekend's meeting at which the 'intellectual Socialist Left' — Robin Blackburn, Hilary Wainwright, Tariq Ali, Stuart Hall and many another good friend — debated whether the Labour Party is now in fit condition to be joined. Artfully, Gott teased our interest with incidentals (such as the analogy he drew from the fact that there was a rose-garden on one side of the meeting-room, and a barbed-wire fence on the other). Yes, but *what happened*? A collective adherence, expressed in the usual round-robin style? Or did converts rise individually, in Christian revivalist style, to tear off personal declarations? Gott said only that the meeting was 'inevitably inconclusive'. Not even the status of his own Odyssey was recorded.

I can supply the omission. Last Wednesday, I was at the GMC of my own Labour Party, when Gott, Richard, of 11 Barford St, N1 was voted through on the new members' list.

■ I am a hopeless boat-freak. Once it was the oared sort, into which you cram yourself with other large youths and fruitlessly dispute the equation which says that the speed of the slimmest hull is ruled by the square root of its waterline. Sail goes better in middle years, but I can manage with a Lilo on a duck pond if there's no other fix available.

Also, I agree that every person thinks meanly of him/herself for 'not having been a soldier, or not having been to sea'. Even so, the *Observer*'s advertising of the result of its ocean yacht-race gets vertically up my nose: WHAT THIS COUNTRY NEEDS IS A REVIVAL OF BLYTH'S SPIRIT. I am delighted to salute Chay Blyth's achievement. I decline to admit its connection with jacking up high-risk investment, getting new work into Merseyside, stopping newspapers from being bought and sold like costume jewellery, or cleaning the pigeon shit off St Pancras. Can no sporting event take place without a numskull copywriter presenting its outcome as an index of the National Will?

■ And that reminds me. Peaceably traversing, in a recent *Guardian,* John Arlott's memoir of the 1948 cricket season, I ran smack-dab into this vignette of Keith Miller:

> 'Nugget' seemed the epitome of Australian masculinity; hard, bold, a gambler, yet *contradictorily,* a serious and perceptive enthusiast for classical music . . .

The italics, and the despair, are mine. It wouldn't matter, if Arlott weren't a civilised writer dispensing a *bien-pensant* orthodoxy. What the hell is the contradiction between musical and athletic ability? — observably, they tend to go together. What makes boldness a masculine (colonial) quality, correlating positively to the oafish? Why does so much standard English writing assume that tentative revolutionaries, pacifist generals, ruthless nurses and irrational scientists are some kind of deviation from a neatly packaged norm? (Discuss trying not to let foam drip onto the paper.)

■ John Thorn is boss of Winchester, and chairman of the Headmasters' Conference. The public schools, he suggests, might offer themselves to a Labour government as sixth-form colleges — provided selectivity is maintained. 'My school,' says Thorn modestly, 'is among the most selective establishments in the world.'

The absence of self-doubt among selectivity's defenders is oddly impressive: like the assurance displayed by the directors of the Battle of the Somme. Few people, presumably, would deny that Britain has given selectivity a pretty good trial. Many would agree that Winchester played a (the?) leading role in the experiment of producing a national elite by such means.

Of course, one mustn't blame Britain's dodgy condition wholly upon the public schools. (Peter Jenkins says it's all the unions). But the nation's rulers must have had *something* to do with the processes which have turned a rather nicely situated middle-sized industrial society into a bit of an international joke. How odd that it does not seem to have occurred to the educators of the rulers — even as a matter of intellectual curiosity — that they might have been working on generally mistaken lines.

Roger Woddis

Bon Marchais

'Suddenly, Communists in the (French) Cabinet is good for business.' — Walter Schwartz, in the Guardian.

Suddenly, *les Rouges* are good for business.
Suddenly, though allies look askance
And doubt his good behaviour,
Georges Marchais is the saviour
Of progress and prosperity in France.

NATO mates may well recoil in horror,
And certain states be in a state of shock,
But changes, Lord preserve us,
Which make some people nervous,
Are sent by God to test the Western bloc.

Mitterrand, who knows his Gallic onions,
Has other shopping items on his list.
With Georges outside and grumpy,
The going could get bumpy.
Better to take his hand than face his fist.

Suddenly, the play of market forces
Demands what goods the comrades can
supply.
The coming day of glory
Could tell a different story,
If customers are hesitant to buy.

This England

£3 book tokens for entries printed. (On postcard, please.)

There seem to be fewer players, quality players, that is, filtering through to the first-class clubs. This is particularly true of tight forwards. I have no doubt that the demise of the grammar school in favour of comprehensive education has also stemmed the flow. — Rugby report in *Financial Times* Andrew Curry)

The *Morning Telegraph,* Sheffield, today says that the Conservatives should stand down in the Warrington by-election and give the SDP a clear run. — *The Times* (Tim Barnsley)

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LETTERS

Women and power

Reading Anna Coote's remarks about the Labour Women's Conference (Diary 19 June), I remembered when we first raised the birth control issue in that conference in 1924. It was then that I discovered that, not only did the conference have no power, but the function of the organiser for the women's side was apparently to keep the women in order for male party purposes.

This is why, ever since, I have worked mainly in and for women's organisations and why I have kept on saying that the vital battle for women was not so much equal pay etc. but power over the purpose of society. Until we do something that makes men believe we mean this, men will continue to regard our views as trivial and negligible.

Dora Russell, Carn Voel, Porthcurno, nr Penzance

Outside the pale

There is one fault which, given our history, is quite unforgivable in socialists; the making of unpersons because of their disagreement with some given line.

With calm arrogance, Robin Blackburn (*NS* 19 June) does not bother to disagree with the positions of Frank Field, Judith Hart and Neil Kinnock, he simply pushes them outside the universe of socialists. By such means, he (with assistance from Hilary Wainwright and Tariq Ali) has no need to define his own socialism. It is presented as something so obvious that it needs no details.

It so happens that I support Benn's bid for election and have supported his general position for rather longer than the latest tack of Robin Blackburn. But that does not mean to say that I, along with many others on the left, believe that we have a well worked out left policy sufficiently coherent and detailed to enable us to discard all those who disagree with it.

In policy terms the left *is* in a shambles. Those whom Blackburn dismisses so casually have done something to alter this. His own contribution remains a blank.

Mike Prior, 35 Cavendish Road, London N4

Backing Benn

Your editorial 'Tony Benn and the Inside Left' (*NS* 12 June) reaches a new low in the politics of equivocation. To suggest a massive abstention in the voting of left-wing MPs for the deputy leadership contest would resolve nothing, and be seen to be another contemptuous swipe from the PLP at the broad mass of the labour movement it is supposed to represent.

'Personalities aside', you say, 'there is nothing to prevent a committed left-winger from treating Denis Healey with respect . . .' Personalities aside, there is every reason for the left-wing of the party to treat Denis Healey with profound distaste. He has, for years, resisted the main policy proposals of the left, even when they have carried overwhelming conference support. That leaves the left with Mr Benn, and faced with this prospect, you can only advocate a pathetic wringing of hands on the sidelines, in the guise of positive action.

May I, as an ordinary constituency member, make the following brief observations, which I think reflect the views of many party members:

1) It would be very nice if there were a range of PLP members of the left who are prepared to unequivocally argue a left-wing perspective on current issues, and to put themselves forward for high office within the party.
2) There aren't.
3) Mr. Benn is.
4) In these circumstances, despite the genuine reservations people may have about Mr Benn as a person, he is the only candidate for high office who has committed himself beyond recall to a programme of action which should command the support of the left-wing of the Party: i.e. extending party democracy; unilateral nuclear disarmament; withdrawal from the EEC; democratic control of major industries, etc. The rest of the shadow cabinet have equivocated on all these issues.
5) In this far from ideal situation, the left-wing of the PLP has a duty to support Mr Benn's candidature for the deputy leadership. He deserves the chance to have his integrity tested in the centre of the political arena, where so many others have been tried and found wanting.

Tim Towers, 27 Avondale Road, Waterlooville, Portsmouth

Last week (Letters 19 June) Chris Mullin challenged your editorial claim that 'Benn has never resigned, or been sacked, from anything', by citing three instances to the contrary. You ignored the first, acknowledged the second, and commented on the third.

The third was Benn's transfer from Industry to Energy in the summer of 1975, in the immediate wake of the catastrophic defeat of the Left in the Common Market referendum. You deny that his removal from Industry was a sacking on the quaint ground that Benn did not then say it was, an argument which would have very strange results if used generally.

Benn was moved from Industry to Energy because as Minister of the former he was responsible for carrying out potentially radical Manifesto commitments regarding planning agreements and state enterprise which his successor, Eric Varley, was able to interpret in an unradical way. There was no doubt in anyone's mind at the time that Benn's removal from Industry was one cost of the Left's defeat in the Common Market referendum. Few sackings in recent political history have been so significant.

G. A. Cohen, 61 Agincourt Road, London NW3

Buzby v. Arthur

Alas for Arthur Marshall. The clever American cousins he admires so much (*NS* 29 May) are now considering a postcode that will sort mail down to groups of addresses in small communities — just as the Post Office does already, to his annoyance.

Worse than that: other countries, such as Canada and the Netherlands, recognise that Britain's code system is so good that they have followed our example.

Try postcoding it, Arthur. It really does work.

Alan Feinstein, Director of Public Relations, The Post Office, Headquarters Building, St Martins le Grand, London EC1

Civil servants' pay dispute

Hugh Dennis's article on the civil service pay dispute (*NS* 12 June) is so abundant with inaccuracies that it is almost a work of fiction. He can't even get the names of the unions right, or their structures.

More seriously, I challenge Mr Dennis to produce a scrap of evidence to back his bold assertion that 'last week union leaders were willing to accept an 8 per cent offer — the opening offer was 7 per cent — with the promise of talk about comparability. However this proposal, devised by Lord Soames, has been over-ruled by the Prime Minister'. I have personally attended every meeting of the CCSU Major Policy Committee and every meeting with Ministers and Officials. At no time have Ministers offered or even hinted at a figure of 8 per cent and at no time has anybody on the Major Policy Committee suggested, let alone moved, that we ought to accept a settlement at that figure.

What makes my blood boil, however, is Mr Dennis's assertion that 'the small Civil Service Union . . . has decided to go for an all out strike without further consultation'. This is not only inaccurate but palpably and demonstrably untrue. My National Executive Council, on 9 June, summoned a joint meeting of Section Executive Committees, a conference of nearly 200 elected lay representatives, for 16 June to consider and to vote upon a motion to be put up by the NEC. The CSU's position will not be finalised until that meeting has been held.

L. H. Moody, General Secretary, Civil Service Union, 5 Praed Street, London W2

A severed head

Rebutting the myths being propagated about the Ladywood de-selection is like playing space invaders. I protested (Letters 5 June) against the one-sided nature of your report. Now that side have paraded another armada of myths onto the screen.

I like D.E. Spilsbury's title 'Sage of Grimsby'. Good for Brummie stuffing. Yet his argument on whether or not Cllr Bore 'defended' (my word) the Russian invasion of Afghanistan comes from only one meeting and is worded very differently to Bob Hoole's. My information is that Cllr Bore told the Labour group that 'there would be those of us who do not agree that the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan is necessarily wrong.' Perhaps it is time for Cllr Bore to tell us what *he* thinks he said instead of leaving the defence to acolytes.

Bob Hoole has been publicly described by the Ladywood MP as one of the leaders of the putsch. So he's bound to defend it. Yet he can hardly do so by posing as affronted constituency chairman retailing impartial truth. His comments on my letter either distort what I said or are themselves inaccurate.

Instead of propagating misinformation where few in the constituency are likely to see and object to it, and at a time when he knows the MP is in India and unable to reply, I have a useful suggestion for him. If he thinks the Ladywood party's shabby treatment of a loyal, hardworking MP can be justified to the mass of party members and to Labour voters, let's put our different viewpoints on this to an open meeting for these two sections in Ladywood. The sitting member with whom Mr Hoole will still have to work for three years before he and the constituency are banished to the dustbin of history, and Mr Bore, should both be present. Then those most involved can judge for themselves. This serves a vital democratic purpose, so I'll even pay for the hall.

Since Mr Hoole thinks, wrongly, that I have not set foot in Ladywood I assume he didn't attend my previous meetings there. He has a much greater responsibility to attend this. I look forward to meeting him.

Austin Mitchell MP, House of Commons, London SW1

Wrong town

I'd like to reply to Nicholas von Maltzahn's letter (*NS* 12 June) about my review of *A Confederacy of Dunces*.

Yes, sorry, St Louis was a straight error, in print before I spotted it.

I don't agree that I made light of the book. It has sometimes been celebrated for the wrong reasons (i.e. the rejection of the manuscript and the fact of the author's suicide) which makes it hard to see the text for the hype. I said it was funny, robust and bore comparison with *Ulysses*. That's no way to underrate a novel.

Judy Cooke, 5 Jeffrey's Street, London NW1

Information wanted

David Fletcher is compiling a *Directory of Literary Estates in the UK and Ireland* and would like to hear from readers who either own the copyright in the work of deceased authors or administer literary estates. Contact him at 57 John Street, Penicuik EH26 8HL.

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Graham Martin looks at Ted Hughes's work and role

Poet as myth-maker?

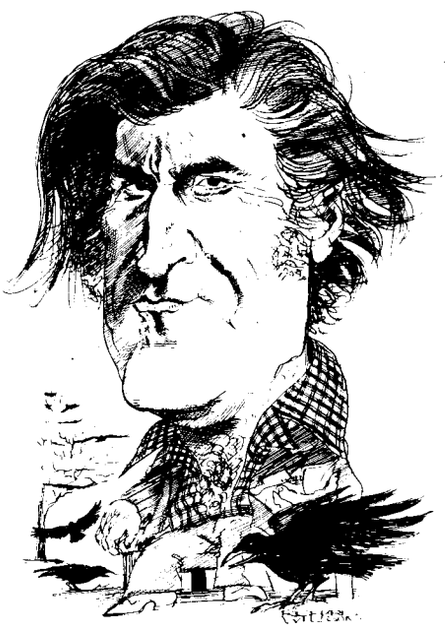
This drowsy hawk sitting in a wood and talking to itself . . . is accused of being a fascist, the symbol of some horrible genocidal dictator. Actually what I had in mind was that in this hawk Nature is thinking. Simply Nature.

Ted Hughes defending his celebrated rooster. Why, though, must nature think so fiercely? Wordsworthian Nature thought in the form of slow-moving clouds, the silent over-growings of spear-grass. Lawrence, certainly closer in spirit to Hughes, praised the skill of his cat in executing a chipmunk. Yet he is just as eloquent about the 'tiny, fragile, half-animate bean' of a baby tortoise and the stillness and silence of the vegetable kingdom attract him even more than the speed and delicate movements of animals. By contrast, Hughes's Nature seems always *in extremis:* pent-up, frustrated jaguars and macaws, self-lacerating larks, suicidal gnats.

When in *Moortown,* instead of elemental predators and pain-seekers, we meet Devon cows and sheep, the weather is (to borrow from an earlier poem) eye-ball denting, the births excruciating. Flies attending the organic decomposition of a dead badger are not just doing Nature's kindly work, they are Poe-like necrophiles, burrowing passionately into the corpse. 'Death destroys a man,' wrote Forster, 'but the idea of death saves him.' Hughes lends this humane paradox a gothic accent. It is as if Ruskin's satiric fantasy of an England bricked over from coast to coast had been so completely realised, contemporary human life so grotesquely displaced by industrial technology that only extreme measures will serve for Hughes. Even the resigned melancholy of the post-industrial English pastoral from Arnold to Larkin ('I thought it would last my time') seems part of a suffocating mainstream tradition.

His pastoral mode insists that the nature we share with Nature is as predatory as the roosting hawk's. To learn this truth thoroughly, to think as Nature thinks, leads to a process of psychic destruction-recreation symbolised in the risen falcon (if that is what it is) at the end of *Cave Birds,* of whom Hughes movingly asks 'But when will he land/On a man's wrist?' Crow having invented sex, we are told in 'A Childish Prank', keeps on laughing. So, we may say, does Hughes, in tones that range from grim to grisly, but it is didactic laughter. Like Graves, he tells one story, and one story only, and the signs are that he intends to go on telling it.

The poems in *Under the North Star,* some amusing, some trivial, one or two deserving a minor place in Hughes's Bestiary, add



nothing to his serious work. They are dominated by Leonard Baskin's wonderful coloured drawings, which in many cases look like the sources for merely dutiful verbal accompaniments by the poet. In *Cave Birds,* text and black-and-white illustration interacted brilliantly. Here, perhaps because of the colours, even the better poems lose a good deal. Browsers could turn to 'Eagle' and 'Muskellunge' to get a taste of the whole. In 'Mooses', the poet makes fun of two mooses who stare weepily at each other, 'two dopes of the deep woods'. It is that kind of fun. 'The Snowy Owl' is treated to a series of exclamation points interrupted by words. 'The Black Bear' complains that he is 'God's Clown'. And so forth. Still, the illustrations make it a bargain and devotees will descry more in the words than the general reader.

Hughes's work, of course, is known for attracting devotees as well as readers, and the distinction shows primarily in the devotees' literal under-writing of the mythological elements in the poems. It would be stupid to deny that some 20th-century poets need myths, or at least to believe that they are inventing them. It would be just as stupid to accept that myths can be created by single authors — certainly not myths in the primitive sense, which were social creations. Hughes conceives of himself as a myth-maker for a post-Christian world — re-animating the relationship between men and nature narrated in pagan myths, which Christianity (followed by Puritanism, followed by Science) had broken and suppressed. Here, as in so much else, he follows Lawrence, whose *The Plumed Serpent* celebrated the death of Christianity and the re-animation of pre-Christian Mexican myth.

Hughes's own attitude, however, seems interestingly complex. During the final TV interview for last year's *Observer*-Arvon Poetry Competition, he remarked of Mandelstam, Pasternak and Akhmatova that

Under the North Star by TED HUGHES *Faber* £5.95

Ted Hughes: The Unaccommodated Universe by EKBERT FAAS With Selected Writings by Ted Hughes and Two Interviews *Black Sparrow Press, Santa Barbara* (No Price)

Ted Hughes: A Critical Study by TERRY GIFFORD & NEIL ROBERTS *Faber* £9.50

Myth in the Poetry of Ted Hughes by STUART HIRSCHBERG *Wolfhound Press, Co Dublin* £8.50

Ted Hughes
Treecreeper

On the tree-bole a zig-zag upward rivulet
Is a dodgy bird, a midget ace,
Busy as a shrew, moth-modest as lichen.

Inchmeal medical examination
Of the tree's skin. Snap-shot micro-scanner
And a bill of instant hypodermic.

He's unzipping the tree-bole
For deeper scrutiny. It sticks. It jerks.
No microbe dare be, nor bubble spider.

All the trees are waiting — pale,
undressed
So he can't dawdle. He jabs, dabs, checks
essentials,
Magnet-safe on undersides, then swings

In a blur of tiny machinery
To the next patient's foot, and trickles
upward
Murmuring 'Good, good!' and 'Good,
good!'

Into the huge satisfying mass of work.

Go fishing

Join water, wade in underbeing
Let brain mist into moist earth
Ghost loosen away downstream
Gulp river and gravity

Lose words
Cease
Be assumed into glistenings of lymph
As if creation were a wound
As if this flow were all plasm healing

Be supplanted by mud and leaves and
pebbles
By sudden rainbow monster-structures
That materialise in suspension, gulping
And dematerialise under pressure of the eye

Be cleft by the sliding prow
Displaced by the hull of light and shadow

Dissolved in earth-wave, the soft sun-shock
Dismembered in sun-melt

Become translucent — one untangling drift
Of water-mesh, and a weight of earth-taste
light

Churned by wing-shadows
Everything circling and flowing and
hover-still

Crawl out over roots, new and nameless
Search for face, harden into limbs

Let the world come back, like a white
hospital
Busy with urgency words

Try to speak and nearly succeed
Heal into time and other people

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their rare greatness stemmed partly from their historic circumstances. In revolutionary Russia, poets could speak from the centre of their culture, a situation enjoyed (suffered?) by no other European poets of this century, though perhaps he might include the contemporary East European poets, Milosz, Popa, Holub, whom he so much admires. He would not include himself, yet the myth-making impulse he shares with Yeats — whose early interest in Irish folk-tales absorbed (unfashionably) Hughes in the Fifties — shades into the notion of speaking from the cultural centre, as the bard of his people. And if his historic circumstances make this impossible? Then the poet can only speak against the history, from the margin. (Yeats, who lived in partly-revolutionary times, was luckier.) In other words, to read Hughes's myth-making literally is to mis-read it. That is what the devotees do.

EKBERT Faas is a devotee. He recounts, with tacit agreement, Hughes's interest in folk-tales, shamanism, the *Orghast* project. In short, the assembling from diverse cultural sources of an eclectic radical primitivism for our times. The information is valuable and effectively brought together. Its early invisible presence in Hughes's poetry helps to explain his distance from his English contemporaries. But when Faas reaches the poems, he treats them as narrative redactions of a myth: the *Crow* poems 'tell the story of Crow'. Yet Hughes himself has said that the story matters only as a source for poems. Like Yeats, he both believes, yet also merely uses, his own invented myth.

In this respect, the *reader* will find Terry Gifford's and Neil Robert's study more valuable. From the outset, it addresses itself to the poems and is prepared to make and sustain critical judgments. Thus, again of *Crow,* they argue that there can be no single story on which to string the poems, because different poems characterise the bird in ultimately contradictory ways. Lavish quotation (they have of course an advantage in their publisher) and thoughtful, observant analysis engage the reader in a continual exercise of individual interpretation and judgment. They are respectfully critical of *Gaudete* (not enough to my taste), and praise *Cave Birds* as Hughes's finest work to date.

Faas's book, though not in that sense for *readers,* nevertheless deserves attention. It includes excerpts from Hughes's occasional criticism, many of great interest, a fuller version of the original 1970 interview printed in the *London Magazine* with autobiographical information about Hughes and Sylvia Plath. There is, too, a second, more recent interview with the poet. Stuart Hirschberg's *Myth in the Poetry of Ted Hughes* is, as the title indicates, a devotee's study. Hughes, not the poems, is the centre of attention — Hughes as Shaman, Trickster and Scapegoat 'wearing masks deriving from his acquaintance with *The Golden Bough* and *The White Goddess'*. Hirschberg does convey a sense of development in the poetry but he perhaps forgets that as well as being myth-maker, Hughes has a sense of humour. Among other readings, Hirschberg identifies the larks in *Skylarks* with Sylvia Plath, and the pike in *Pike* with the devil. □

Terence Hawkes examines English attitudes to structuralist thought

Critics in their castle

Working with Structuralism by DAVID LODGE *Routledge* £10.95
Structuralism or Criticism? Thoughts on How We Read by GEOFFREY STRICKLAND *Cambridge* £17.50
Positions by JACQUES DERRIDA *Athlone Press* £10.95

Structuralism has been around quite long enough for us to be used to it. So the clamour of its recent head-on collision with the English academic consciousness possibly represents something more complex than a row about literary criticism. A clue lies in structuralism's blatant foreignness. The current 'crisis' in English studies clearly has some of its roots in the crisis in the notion of Englishness which such studies were invented to serve. Since the war, many forces — Welsh and Scottish nationalism, the continuing nightmare of Ulster, television-fuelled regional cultures, black and Asian subcultures, the slow explosion of the 1944 Education Act — have all exerted their disintegrating pressures on that confident, unified sense of English identity which validated and was validated by a particular notion of English literature. In this context, structuralism meets a ready-made response. The invader, bent only on pillage and defilement, must be repelled at all costs, the castle doors slammed firmly in the garlic-scoffing face.

Fortunately, the castle's inhabitants are not all of one mind. David Lodge, for instance, has been sitting in the courtyard with his suitcases packed for some time. *Working With Structuralism* confirms him as a cautious but committed traveller, ready and willing to cross the moat and treat with the foreign devils.

His response to the present chaos in criticism (not unlike the state of physics after Einstein and Heisenberg, he claims) is appropriately workmanlike, with its calm and level-headed buckling down to practical issues. Reassuringly, Lodge goes out of his way to preserve continuity with older and more familiar terminologies, patiently and persuasively aiming to talk us down from the heights of abstract theory to the firm ground of specific works of art. A taming, domesticating exercise perhaps, but one which derives its impetus from the entirely sensible recognition that structuralism (a too-elastic label covering 30 or more years of still developing and often contradictory activity) won't just go away. What has gone away is New Criticism, that bland Anglo-American confection whose covert underwriting of the ideology of Englishness (and Americanness) proved so successful that it was able, over the years, to become invisible: to appear as 'criticism' itself. Unmasked by its own shortcomings in the face of various upheavals, and with the consequent necessity, as Lodge puts it, for judicious critics to work with, alongside, and in the light of quite different notions, New Criticism's presuppositions have now had to be declared, and duty must be paid on them. Hence the re-packing evident in this particular case.

Some luggage has already gone in advance; notably Lodge's impressive account of the implications for fiction of Jakobson's distinction between metaphor and metonymy in *The Modes of Modern Writing* (1977). Most of that book's good qualities, its sure-footed lucidity, the crispness of its exposition, also enhance the present volume. Any residual angularity can reasonably claim consonance with the 'workshop' character proclaimed in the title. The first section, 'Applying Structuralism', offers careful and fertile analyses of *Hard Times*, of Hemingway's 'Cat in the Rain', and of one of Lodge's own stories: work which amply demonstrates the extensive productivity of what has been learned from Barthes, Todorov, Genette, Greimas and others. The metaphor-metonymy distinction operates revealingly throughout, becoming the basis for a fruitful 'map' of the modern period in which the oscillation of writers between these poles emerges as cognate with their modernism or anti-modernism. Other ventures include a number of courageous attempts, written for a variety of occasions, to assimilate structuralism's impact without 'paying the price of incomprehensibility'. They don't pay it and as a result they acquire a sprightly introductory function. Less successful are the essays on Evelyn Waugh, Ted Hughes, Tom Wolfe and Marin County's 'psychobabble' — not for any lack of intrinsic interest, but because they seem not so much provocatively 'counter' to structuralist theory (a claim the Preface too boldly makes) as simply deprived of it.

Lodge's interest in structuralism remains, he cheerfully admits, limited largely to its earlier 'classical' modes in which it aimed to do for literature (or any other human system such as food or fashion) what grammar does for language. Later, more politically committed developments, as in the work of Foucault, Lacan and Derrida, which seek to analyse cultural institutions as agents of ideology, are perhaps too resolutely shunned. His book's inventive energy, its conviction and its resourcefulness offer immediate rewards nonetheless and they should attract readers to the cause.

MEANWHILE, Geoffrey Strickland isn't going anywhere. He has pulled up the drawbridge and has the boiling oil poised on the ramparts. *Structuralism or Criticism?*'s title says it all, proposing a polarity formed of fundamentally Anglo-Saxon prejudices. Strongly influenced by the work of E. D. Hirsch, Strickland seeks to expose structuralism as a coldly rational, mechanistic activity, wholly unsuited to critical analysis at any level beyond that of the sentence. Benveniste's distinction between the 'semi-

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otic' and the 'semantic' levels of language gives him his cue. Semiotics can deal with linguistic elements up to, but not at or beyond the level of discourse. The attempt to apply notions of linguistic structure to literary works can therefore only prove reductive. Literature in fact operates at the semantic level of the sentence and larger units: it deals in the unique 'here and now' of discursive practice. The only appropriate response to that is one which treats the text as the expression of a discernible or deducible authorial presence and so engages in the essentially non-philosophical activity of criticism. This involves the special skill (or even 'gift') of reading: that is, an informed and sensitive appreciation of the author's commitment to and involvement with the words on the page. The final section of the book offers Roland Barthes as the exemplar of a heady, cavorting French 'philosophy' which has turned its back on the author, and F. R. Leavis as the outstanding exponent of a concrete and practical English 'criticism' which takes the author's meaning and intentions as its focus of interest.

Strickland's bluff defensiveness has its own charm, and he accurately diagnoses the potently disruptive nature of the force he confronts. Since, in essence, it demands that we listen to the text, not the author, it thereby stretches past breaking-point the English notion of what a text is and may be. But his chatty, genial review of the prospect never really engages with the complexity of the central issue. The idea of a text's independence is too flatly resisted, its potential plurality too readily dismissed as a 'crazy notion'.

CHRISTOPHER PRIEST

The Affirmation

"An original and haunting novel."
Andrew Sinclair, The Times

"... extraordinary compulsion." *Janice Elliott, The Sunday Telegraph*

"Altogether an original thriller."
Judy Cooke, New Statesman

FABER & FABER
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In fact, Strickland's criteria beg most of the questions to which they are applied and the result is an often delicious but scarcely reassuring insularity which occasionally dwindles into arrogance. Who but a Cambridge-educated Englishman could conclude that 'unlike Barthes, Leavis has never pretended to be anything more than a critic' — a statement which never begins to probe the simplistic notion of 'critic' which it reinforces. The case for Leavis as the alternative to Barthes is painstakingly put, and the Frenchman's 'theoretical plausibility' neatly if predictably contrasted with the Englishman's immediate and concrete apprehension of the texture of writing. But there is a cardboard quality to the figures and their standing as true *alternatives* finally lacks conviction.

It isn't just that the polarity 'structuralism or criticism' is naive or misconceived: it isn't just that the distinction which offers the systematic, philosophical Frenchman opposed to the 'necessarily unsystematic' critical Englishman is misleading in respect of both; it is that the very distinction between philosophy and literature upon which these views rest has itself been overtaken and undermined by the work of Derrida and others and that this seems only obliquely grasped in Mr Strickland's book. His championing of Leavis restricts the range of Barthes' work available for discussion, leaving aside that part of it which bears the influence of Derrida. As a result, the issues seem hardly current and the repeatedly struck note of urgency appears correspondingly strident.

Mr Strickland is a Reader at Reading whose subject is reading. A sense of the ironies implicit therein is one of the pleasures on offer in any encounter with post-structuralism and Derrida's *Positions,* which consists of three interviews of cumulative degrees of complexity, would not be the worst place to start. 'Implications', the first interview with Henri Ronse, offers what might be termed a missionary position, since some fairly clear exposition of fairly tricky principles takes place there.

SAUSSURE long ago demonstrated that our sense of a one-to-one correspondence between words and the 'real world' beyond language is an illusion. Derrida attacks the extension of that illusion into the heart of our ideology: its ultimate manifestation the sense that there exists somewhere, beyond all mediation, a pristine 'voice', an antecedent 'presence', a graspable 'origin' a final 'author' and an ultimate authority. This 'logocentric', essentialist belief in 'presence' limits our apprehension of a world which exists finally without its dubious benefit, consisting rather of a multiplicity of competing sign-systems referring endlessly in their 'free play' of differences one to another.

For the 'deconstructive' critic who accepts this, the implications are vast. Nothing (certainly not the author) can be accepted as already constituted outside the text, which accordingly becomes the sole focus of interest. And the 'textuality' of all human utterance undermines any notion of prior, or agreed 'authenticity'. Speech, which claims to manifest self-presence, has no priority for Derrida. Like all forms of human culture, speech offers a text: it is a kind of writing. And within the text, the trope ranks as the chief means by which language exhibits its strategies for freedom from the constraints of authorial 'presence'. Because of the tropes of which it is made, a text's potential for meaning is endless.

You might think that open-endedness of this sort — a continuing state of travelling hopefully — would commend itself to a criticism and a culture as evidently in transit as that of English. But Geoffrey Strickland's failure to deal with its implications obviously impairs his case that a sensitive 'reading' of an author's authoritative meanings can stand as the genuine alternative to an insensitive abstract 'philosophy'. And David Lodge's admission (for such it is) that to open a book by Derrida makes him 'feel that the mystification and intimidation of the reader is the ultimate aim of the enterprise' seriously curtails the scope of this own work 'with' new theories. Derrida's commitment certainly impels him to mystify and intimidate the kind of reader who persists in a certain sort of reading. And he has a joky tendency to enact as much as to state his position. That, at least, must serve as the justification for an increasing and finally engulfing complexity in this book which ultimately denies any expository function to the second and third interviews (with Julia Kristeva and with Jean-Louis Houdebine and Guy Scarpetta respectively).

To English eyes, the effect is entirely unsettling because it challenges preconceptions about the nature of distinctiveness and clarity: qualities which we like to think of as innocent, transparent, involving standards and practices that are universally available and subject to no historical, political, or philosophical determination. If structuralism hints at an opposite view, Derridean post-structuralism actively embraces it. In doing so, it manifests an important truth about the deconstructive project: 'Deconstruction . . . is not neutral. It intervenes.' It aims, in short, to transform the way we see the world, to indicate the limits of our inherited categories of clarity and distinctiveness.

It would be a pity if a defensive dwelling upon structuralism's shortcomings made English criticism miss the opportunities for the sort of fundamental intervention that post-structuralism intends. For in turning its back on an illusory, final, 'finished' meaning, it offers what has always been the basis for radical change: the notion that meanings can be produced, not merely inherited; that texts are available to make sense *with,* not just *of.* □

Among this week's contributors:

GRAHAM MARTIN is Professor of Literature at the Open University. He is currently writing about science fiction for a course on popular culture.

TERENCE HAWKES is Professor of English at the University of Cardiff.

SALMAN RUSHDIE's novel *Midnight's Children* was reviewed in the *NS* of 1 May this year.

NICHOLAS SHRIMPTON teaches English at Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford.

WILLIAM BOYD's first collection of short stories, *At the Yankee Station*, is to be published by Hamish Hamilton in July.

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FICTION 1

Salman Rushdie

300 years of rubble

The Meeting at Telgte by GÜNTER GRASS *Secker* £5.95

When the Thirty Years' War ended, one word was sufficient to describe Germany: it was a land of rubble. And in our own century, after a war which did its work at approximately six times the speed: once again, nothing to be seen but rubble. 'The thing that hath been tomorrow,' reads the opening sentence of Günter Grass's new novel, 'is that which shall be yesterday.'

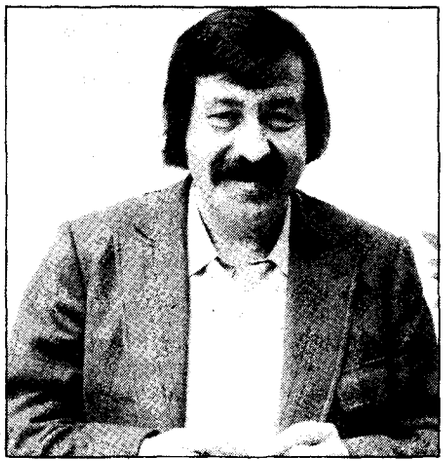
Grass's subject is how German writers responded to ruination; how, after Hitler, German pens rewrote Genesis to read: After the end was the word. How they tore their language down and built it anew; how they used words to assault, excoriate, accept, encompass and regenerate; how the phoenix poked its beak out of the fire. Rubble, after World War II, gave birth to what was at first disparagingly termed 'rubble literature'. Heinrich Böll, defending these books of war and homecoming, wrote: 'We have no reason to be ashamed of this label . . . we see things the way they are, with a human eye that normally is not quite dry and not quite wet, but damp, for let us not forget that the Latin for dampness is *humor*.' And now Günter Grass has taken the story of a group of writers who set about the task of seeing sharply, but with a sense of *humor*, and projected it 300 years backwards in time; which of course, Grass being Grass, enables him to tell the tale more humorously.

On the cover of his book drawn by himself, is the image of a hand holding a goose quill rising triumphant from a heap of stones . . . taking arms, so to speak, against that sea of rubble.

In 1947, such a meeting of writers did in fact take place: that was when H. W. Richter first convened the famous 'Group 47'. Its mirror-meeting, the one Grass describes, never happened, at Telgte or anywhere except in his own Croesus-rich imagination; but it seems none the less actual for that.

There assemble, in the Bridge Tavern at Telgte, a town located in the midst of the 1647 peace negotiations, divers writers, publishers and even musicians, 'for the purpose of giving new force to the last remaining bond between all Germans, namely the German language . . . Everything had been laid waste, words alone kept their lustre.' As a matter of fact, even the words themselves are somewhat tarnished: the great composer Schütz tells the Meeting, 'When the fatherland was laid low, poetry could hardly be expected to flower.' And in a comic-opera parallel to the 20th-century pollution of Germany by the terrible dead language of Nazism, we find the tongue of the 17th century polluted, too: all manner of armies, tramping and Babeling across the land, have left their bootmarks on the common speech, so thoroughly that the landlady Libuschka in *The Meeting at Telgte* is moved, at one point, to ask the assembled bards 'whether the *signores* would care for a *boccolino* of *rouge*.'

The Bridge Tavern is, of course, symbolically named: Grass the snail, the Social Democrat, the 'irenicist', has always been a



Fay Godwin

man for bridges. And when the inn burns down, its destruction seems to signify the failure of the writers' hopes. But before the fire, we have been given a marvellously credible portrait of a bunch of bitching, pedantic, devout, bawdy, gloomy and innocent men struggling to build a new world from the flawed fabric of their minds.

At the centre of the book stands Christoffel Gelnhausen, a version of the writer Grimmelshausen, whose novel *Simplicissimus* is the rumbustious, iconoclastic ancestor of *The Tin Drum*; riotous, self-taught, amoral, Stoffel is also Grass himself in green doublet and feathered hat. In *The Flounder*, Grass gave himself the starring role and popped up, disguised as all sorts of folk, throughout German history; in *The Meeting*, which is a sort of chip off that mighty fish, he is once again his own best character. Stoffel lies, cheats, steals, punches women in the eye; he empties the Bridge Tavern to make room for the poets by telling its residents that the scribblers have the plague, which is 'no respecter of wealth'. But after the book's great set-piece, a feast provided by Gelnhausen which turns out to be the product of a looting trip, he defends himself against the rage of the rhymers by pointing out that they are, in fact, also corrupt, and precisely because they do respect wealth too much: 'He and his horsemen had acted in the spirit of the times, just as the gentlemen here assembled . . . when they wrote poems in praise of princes to whom murder and arson came as naturally as their daily prayers.' What enrages the poets most of all about Stoffel, of course, is neither his lying nor his looting but his decision to compete with them at writing . . .

To balance Gelnhausen, we have the landlady Libuschka or Courage, veteran of umpteen battles, giver and receiver of the pox, literary know-all and provider of much poorer fare than we're used to in Grass novels (Stoffel complains bitterly about the food). This Courage is also a visitor from Grimmelshausen; Brecht has borrowed her before now. The explosive relationship of Courage and Stoffel is what breathes genuine, Grassy life into an otherwise astonishingly restrained book.

Because *Telgte* is Günter Grass in second gear. The book is written in honour of the 70th birthday of H. W. Richter; *The Flounder* was Grass's 50th birthday present to himself. Perhaps it's time all these celebrations stopped; Grass — unthinkable thought — is in danger of sounding a wee bit cosy. But enough carping; even in a minor key, he's still one of the few great ones around, and has written a fascinating, entertaining book. You may wish to consider, while reading it, why the rubble of the German cities yielded up the likes of Grass, Böll and Lenz, while British rubble produced only car parks. □

FICTION 2

Nicholas Shrimpton

Coming of age

The Oxford Book of Short Stories edited by V. S. Pritchett *Oxford* £9.50

Nervous friends of the English short story must already be ordering their suits of mourning, so intense has been the academic attention recently accorded to the form. Walter Allen published his magisterial survey, *The Short Story in English*, in February. Now, four months later, Sir Victor Pritchett adds that traditional monument to established literary achievement, an Oxford Book. Forty-one stories stand to attention in the full-dress binding of sombre blue and gold. No longer overshadowed by the big guns of the novel, and no longer incriminated by association with the quizzes and crosswords of the popular press, they are assembled for a scholarly salute. The former awkward squad of English literature has become a ceremonial battalion.

The trouble with such heroic formalities, of course, is that they tend to occur only when active operations are over. As outlets for short fiction on the printed page relentlessly decline, the genre may be acquiring the belated dignity of the well-laid-out corpse.

The choice of Sir Victor to edit this collection is, in itself, a reassurance that such funereal assumptions are premature. Walter Allen described him, very persuasively, as 'since the death of D. H. Lawrence, the outstanding English short story writer', and he has a practitioner's eye for the continuing vitality of the mode. His all too brief Introduction argues that the 'modern story', succinct, evocative and open-ended, has displaced the novel as the central record of contemporary experience. 'In a restless century,' he writes, 'which has lost its old assurances and in which our lives are fragmented, the nervous side-glance has

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replaced the steady confronting gaze.' And his selection ends with two comparatively recent pieces which both suggest new possibilities of form. John Updike's 'Lifeguard' reproduces in prose the erudition and moral ambiguity of the Victorian dramatic monologue. William Trevor's comically desolate 'Going Home', with its confined but striking setting and its tense intimacy, points directly towards the television plays through which the short-story impulse will in future have to find its general audience.

THIS SENSE that the short story may be on the brink of a new maturity rather than on the lip of the grave is reinforced by an appreciation of its unusual youthfulness. Pritchett agrees with Allen, not only in drawing a firm line between tales, gestes or romances on the one hand and the short story proper on the other, but also in his particular choice of chronological watershed. *The Oxford Book of Short Stories* opens, like *The Short Story in English,* with Sir Walter Scott's 'The Two Drovers', originally published in *Chronicles of the Canongate* in 1827. The story's claim to absolute priority may well be disputed. It remains, nonetheless, a strikingly comprehensive blueprint for the new medium, displaying in a slightly compartmentalised way no less than three of its most persistent characteristics. It is an acute moral drama, in which an ironic twist of circumstance throws two close friends into a fatal quarrel. It is elaborately particular, insisting upon its documentary exactitude with a mass of legal detail. And it introduces, however briefly, an element of the supernatural to intensify the significance of its isolated events.

Again and again in the next 150 years these distinctive qualities recur, in a literary form supposedly defined only by its brevity. Pritchett insists that his selection of authors is a personal one and that stories have not been selected for their typicality. Some masterpieces (such as Joyce's 'The Dead') are omitted precisely because they have been over-anthologised. The collection remains, despite this, a remarkably convincing demonstration of the coherence of the genre. At certain times, and in certain hands, one or other of Scott's three strands may predominate. In the 20th century (that is, after Chekhov) there is a general movement, in Pritchett's words, away from 'disclosure' and towards 'evocation'. But beneath the evolving surface a skeleton remains intact. *The Oxford Book of Short Stories* is not, as one might have feared, a bag of literary allsorts. To read it is a single, and singularly impressive, experience.

Every reader, of course, will feel aggrieved about the absence of certain personal favourites, particularly when the principle of avoiding the over-anthologised seems to have been applied so erratically. To represent Poe by the wearily familiar 'Fall of the House of Usher', for example, but Kipling by 'The Record of Badalia Herodsfoot' is downright baffling. On a larger scale, the omission of Melville is so conspicuous as to deserve a word of explanation in the Introduction. But the collection remains, as one would expect from Sir Victor Pritchett, a deft and daring act of critical choice. □

TELEVISION

William Boyd

Moonshine

FROM the outset the scope of the TV mega-series has been large. *Civilisation*, *Life on Earth*, *The Making of Mankind* . . . it seems that the number of exotic locations and air-miles the presenter can run up in some way justifies the portentous titles he or she chooses. But Carl Sagan, with *Cosmos* (BBC-1), leaves them all behind. His programme is not only about all that 'is, was, or ever will be', but he also conducts us on a voyage through the universe.

Our craft for this epic journey was the starship *Imagination*, a strange vehicle looking like a reconditioned attic in a Dulux ad, with an enormous TV screen at one end. At a tiny console in the middle of the floor sits Captain Carl, our cosmic tour-guide as we career through deep space. Sagan has a mellifluous, curiously liquid voice, as if his saliva glands are jammed full on, and he trades heavily on the poetic resonances of the solar system. Super-nova wheel by 'strewn like sea-froth on the waves of space'; we see 'a rogue galaxy made of a trillion stars'. Cut to a close up of Carl's rapt, votive face. When the SS *Imagination* finally came down to earth I'm glad to say it brought the programme with it, substituting for impassioned panegyrics a few hard facts. But it was a dangerous start. Somewhere in the constellation of Orion we passed 'a young star surrounded by whisps of nebulosity'. I couldn't have defined it better myself.

WHAT with Carl Sagan and a double helping of John Keats there was a fair amount of vein-throbbing intensity about this week, of the sort which gives poetry a bad name. In *John Keats* (BBC-2) you could tell young John was a poet by the way his gaze would fix itself on some object in the middle distance and a tentative, lip-twitching smile would cross his face.

There's nothing wrong with writing a play about Keats, or any famous artist or writer come to that, as long as it's realised the exercise is fraught with many more dangers than is an orthodox piece of drama. Writer Nick McCarty obviously wanted to be as true to his subject as possible and so called in Keats's biographer Robert Gittings as editorial consultant and stuck closely to the poet's own words from his letters and poems. The only problem about this was that conversations took on a hopelessly unconversational tone with Keats and friends discoursing fluently about Negative Capability and other theories of poetry at almost every opportunity.

The production itself was in parts extremely stylised; sometimes the action was played against a black backdrop, sometimes in flimsy looking sets with a minimum of props. Fine, but this contrasted strongly and uncomfortably with realistic location scenes where the illusion of staging was set aside. This, I suspect, was a budgetry rather than an artistic decision, but, on television, it's better to plump firmly for one particular approach than to try hopefully for the best of both worlds.

An additional cause for worry was the miscasting of Gerard Murphy as Keats. Keats was neat but minute — just over five feet tall. Murphy's burly frame could have done staunch service in the front row of a rugby scrum and was so rudely healthy that the eventual consumptive demise seemed wildly improbable. However, the programme was considerably better than a TV biopic of Shelley, made a few years ago, which whackily decided to 'update' everything and had Shelley, Mary Godwin and Claire Clairmont hammering down the autostrada in a souped-up mini with the car radio blaring rock music.

By largely rejecting the realistic approach *John Keats* made life difficult for itself. On the other hand *A Town like Alice* (BBC-1) was immeasurably enhanced by its attention to detail and pursuit of exactness, which made an over-leisurely and under-edited film continually watchable. In parts one and two English girl Jean Paget meets crass Aussie sergeant Joe Harman while both are Japanese POWs during World War II. Parts three and four concentrate on their reunion some three years after the war's end and Jean's attempt to make a tolerable life for herself and Joe in a hellhole of an outback township.

It rather fizzled out in the final episode with everything ending predictably happily, but it offered a fine performance from Helen Morse as Jean and a bonzer one from Bryan Brown as Joe.

GIVEN the recent Billie Jean King revelations I thought that a programme called *Inside Wimbledon* (BBC-1) written by someone called Gay Search would be more dirt-digging in the ladies' locker-room. In fact it turned out to be a competent behind-the-scenes documentary of 'this great sporting occasion'. A certain amount of interest is always guaranteed in this sort of programme, assuming that it makes an effort to get behind the public facade. The tone was as usual highly respectful and studiously inoffensive but it couldn't disguise the fact that, no matter how securely herded with our other national Sacred Cows, Wimbledon, like any suburban golf or tennis club, is a bastion of middle-class privilege.

The 375 members, the commentator informed us, pay around £8 a year 'for the sort of service that went out with the First World War'. Eight quid? That explains where some of the money from the tournament goes: keeping the subscriptions down and the servants up to scratch.

The mask of this 'wonderful institution' really slipped when we were shown girls being interviewed for the highly sought-after posts of *chauffeuses* to the tennis stars. 'We want the sort of girl who'll fit in with the All England Club,' an official asserted. The embryonic Sloane Ranger being interviewed was told that, as a gentle test, she'd be asked to describe a sample route through London. 'Oh God,' she said, appalled, 'don't make me go through Hackney or anywhere like that.' □

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John Coleman

Twitching the strings

From the Life of the Marionettes (X) *Academy Two*
All Night Long (AA) *Plaza 1*
Chameleon *ICA, from 2 July*
For Your Eyes Only (A) *Odeon, Leicester Square*

Sometimes one finds oneself yearning for the days when God had tenure, however disputed and disruptive, in the Bergman universe. Since He died and the director, as it were, took His place, things have tended to go from bad to worse. Miraculously, out of the all-too-human despair that was left Bergman has created a few of his greatest masterpieces. I think of *Cries and Whispers, Scenes from a Marriage, Autumn Sonata,* where an equally human optimism fitfully and magnificently flickered into life against the odds, where subtle shifts in those great, screen-filling landscapes of faces could belie the anguished words being spoken. And the unredeemed bleakness of Bergman's first film to be made in Germany, *The Serpent's Egg,* had at least a temporal and geographical justification: Berlin as a city of dreadful night in 1923. Disagreeable as it was, with its 'easy' hindsight and its ambiguity towards persecution of Jews, it was an extraordinary achievement for a man attempting to transplant his gnarled and beloved Swedish roots into foreign soil.

From the Life of the Marionettes, his second German film, makes several things clearer. Filmed in the Bavaria Studios, Munich, with Sven Nykvist on camera and important crew members from *The Serpent's Egg* again to hand, it could — to most intents and purposes — have been made in Sweden. A splendid German cast is encouraged to give the kind of intensely shaded performances previously thought the prerogative of Bergman's repertory actors. The director, in a phrase, barely seems to have emigrated. Bergman is alive and well and living inside his own teeming, tormented skull. And that is a chamber whose spiritual furniture and fittings we have grown to know down the years, whose discomforts we have learned to adapt ourselves to almost too well. For, from the stark implications of its title on, this new film retraces old ground and it does so with a manner of professional pessimism that, from a lesser master, might be felt as perfunctory. The novelty of the piece lies, if anywhere, in its skilful and perfectly legitimate displacement of time. Events before and after a criminal act are offered, with chronological titles, out of order.

A youngish businessman, Peter Egermann (Robert Atzorn), has killed a prostitute and buggered her corpse. We open on the mysterious later stages of this episode, in flat, garish colour, with the whore, Ka (Rita Russek), caught fearfully crouching at a camera angle suggestive of Expressionist cinema. The effect is jarringly sensationalist, a crude appetite-whetter. Then black-and-white takes over as the other principals go through their paces, as often as not talking to camera or mirror or (not at first seen) investigator — i.e. to us, the audience — in close shot. Professor Jensen (Martin Benrath) was Peter's not so friendly psychiatrist, prepared to make a pass at his patient's wife Katarina (Christine Buchegger), a fashion designer who drinks too much. Her partner Tim (Walter Schmidinger) is a sad gay, who confesses to having fancied Peter himself and having attempted to disrupt his marriage by giving him Ka's address and number.

The characters flay each other and themselves with generous remorselessness, seeming to need or relish someone else present as they unpack their hearts (Katarina's sexual scorn of Peter is uttered before a mutual friend), rarely heeding what the other is saying. All are materially in clover: none is anything less than desperate, boosted by booze, pills and bad sex. Peter's repeated refrain is, 'All ways are closed', and — in a grimly humorous instant that translates poorly — he expresses what could be the film's auto-critique during a 3 am tête-à-tête with his wife: 'A typical component of ennui is that you feel an awful ennui in explaining how ennui comes about.' In the last resort, which discovers Peter a mute, neat chess-player in a green cell (colour has returned) and settles on a facile symbol of infantile regression, a worn teddy bear, as its final image, only the most threadbare of psychological unwrappings is supplied. Jensen proposes Peter as a latent homosexual, all right within the bounds of his everyday milieu, doomed as soon as he steps outside and encounters Ka.

There are a few stunning visual effects — bleached-out dream sequences; a mirrored Tim apparently literally beside himself; a nocturnal office scene, with Peter endlessly dictating a complicated letter, part of his mind elsewhere — but they register rather as directorial tours de force, items in isolation: they hardly make a credible contribution to the problem of Peter. Significantly, the one person of warmth, humanity, even dignity on display is the purveyor of bought sex. When Peter has Ka sit, then stand to order, she wonderfully conveys a proper resentment. This, she implies, is a dictatorial kinkiness far nastier than the physical contortions that are her stock-in-trade. And she alone shows a swift tenderness, cradling his head when he blurts, 'I'm tired'. It would be good to believe that Bergman is fully aware of the overturning of conventional morality implicit in Ka (he *does* allow her some poetic scraps about seasonal smells, which ring written and false), that all the 'strong', contradictory verbal outpourings are only there to be undermined by her blatant, ignorant humanity; but the truth is she is too little present to counteract the overkill of pup-

A dream of murder: Peter and Katarina

petry, Bergman's fingers are too busily twitching the strings of his hollow principals, for such an irony to get a foothold. This is as near to self-pastiche as the master has come in a long while.

JEAN-CLAUDE Tramont's *All Night Long,* on the grinny, relaxed face of it, might have been just the antidote called for after a dose of magisterial angst. Gene Hackman's solution to the cares of the executive, suburbanite world, is a chair through the boss's window, a downgrading to night manager of one of his firm's supermarkets, then to a waiter's job, all the while blithely seducing a sexy and dumbish local housewife away from his muscle-bound son. Barbra Streisand, eerily essaying a kind of Marilyn Monroe babyishness, is for once unraucous as the flighty, bemused *bonbon* of contention (nice appearance by Kevin Dobson as her thick fireman husband) and there are a few fine, zany lines and scenes. But the show has been slapsticked together and the strenuous casualness of all concerned becomes wearying.

Jon Jost's *Chameleon* cost $35,000 and it is hard to see where the money went. A tenuous plot-line has its co-author Bob Glaudini as a conman and cocaine-pusher working out of LA and those with a stomach for amateurish acting, self-consciously arty photography (shooting into the sun, etc.) and posturing, 'tripping' dialogue may enjoy following him through a disconnected and nefarious day or so. Most of his acquaintance seem stoned out of their tiny minds. One imagines friends were summoned to play something like themselves in an art-gallery party scene. Certainly there was a sense of others having fun at the expense of my time. This and other works by Mr Jost may be viewed at the ICA from 2 July.

For Your Eyes Only is the soundly named latest Bond, the ears being gratified with nothing more substantial than various explosions. There is one joke, cleverly left to the very end. Elsewhere, it is an omnibus edition of car chases, underwater frolics, mountain-scaling, ski-runs, casino triumphs and Roger Moore as Action Man, at last and warmingly showing the odd facial wrinkle. I concur with Truffaut. This dozy, all-action stuff is the death of cinema. It makes the doodles of a Jost understandable: well, almost. □

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ART

John Spurling

Hour of the day

Alfred Sisley *David Carritt, 15 Duke Street, London SW1*

For sale: Winter at Veneux-Madon (c. 1880). British galleries please note.

Alfred Sisley is a difficult artist to pin down, partly because he has had less exposure than the other leading Impressionists. David Carritt's is his first one-man show in London for more than 40 years. Then again he didn't whore after Pointillism like Pissarro, nor develop beyond Impressionism like Monet, Renoir and Cézanne. Less atmospheric than Monet's, less earthy than Pissarro's, his paintings can seem almost devoid of personality and for that very reason quintessentially Impressionist.

He was an Englishman born in Paris, where his father ran a business exporting artificial flowers to South America. Most of the Impressionists' fathers disapproved of their sons' choice of career, but William Sisley was more amenable. Alas, he was ruined by the Franco-Prussian War and from 1870 onwards Alfred was constantly on his uppers, suffering in middle age the classic hardships of *la vie de bohème,* to which Monet, Renoir and Pissarro had been inured from the beginning. Renoir had loved Sisley, during their early days painting in the steps of the Barbizon School around Fontainebleau, for his 'undaunted good humour', but it grew, as time wore on, very daunted indeed. A friend described him at the end of his life as 'irritable, dissatisfied, agitated . . . Little by little all joy left his days, except for the joy of painting, which never abandoned him'. He died, still poor and unsuccessful, at the age of 60, three months after his wife, whom he had nursed devotedly. A year later a painting he had sold for 180 francs was auctioned for 43,000.

ONE WOULD not guess any of this sad tale from the paintings. Insofar as they suggest a temperament at all, it is the genial, carefree one noted by Renoir. Even a painting as late as *The Church at Moret, afternoon,* done in 1893, is bathed in a mellow glow and the eddy of small blue birds rising from the tower looks almost like a deliberate riposte to the black crows of Van Gogh's wheatfield of 1890. 'The joy of painting' for Sisley must have been that, having once found in Impressionism the ideal expression of his own feelings about landscape, he had only to settle down, quietly, persistently, to explore them. Not for him, as for his original companions in evolving Impressionism or for the generation that came after, the further struggles around form, peasants, modern life, the figure, the portrait, inner significance or light and colour for their own sake. He alone concentrated entirely on landscape, he more than any of them was drawn to the reticent, lyrical Corot rather than the ebullient, dramatic Courbet.

All the same, there are distinct phases of development in Sisley's work and they are admirably demonstrated by this small exhibition. The largest painting, from the 1860s, when Sisley was still supported by his father and working with Renoir near Fontainebleau, is pre-Impressionist, a grand forest avenue in Barbizon earth-colours, with glimpses of a white sky. In the paintings of the 1870s the sky has become almost more important than the ground, proposing as it were the themes of movement and colour which are reflected, absorbed and sobered down by earth and vegetation. Paths and rivers mediate between the two protagonists, working both as structural diagonals and as distributors of the sky's higher-keyed colour. Small figures are used chiefly as accents in the landscape, a white hat in a field suggesting not so much somebody working as the fresh breeze already inferred from the rags of white cloud against strong blue overhead. Earth, vegetation and even the trunks of trees and the roofs of houses are alike softened by the play of light over them; the paint is put on quite thinly and evenly.

In 1879, nearing 40, Sisley suddenly grew restless. 'I am tired of vegetating,' he wrote to a friend, 'as I've been doing for so long. The moment has come for me to make a decision.' His decision was not to take part in that year's Impressionist show, but to try for the Salon again, since that remained, in spite of all efforts to bypass it, the only road to fame and fortune. He was rejected by the Salon, but his decision clearly affected his paintings. Not that they were any more acceptable to the public, but that during the 1880s they became tougher, more assertive. The change is partly a matter of structure — the foreground comes closer and the verticals of the trees are more dominating — and partly a development of technique. The background is still painted softly and thinly, but the nearer trees and ground vegetation and sometimes the skies are now done in thick, sticky brushstrokes, with an effect somewhat reminiscent of Constable, whom Sisley certainly admired. Sisley himself wrote, justifying the use of 'different techniques within the same picture', that:

> the sunlight in softening the outlines of one part of a scene will exalt others and these effects of light which seem nearly material in a landscape ought to be interpreted in a material way on canvas.

The more one looks at these later paintings, the more one becomes aware of Sisley's concealed strength — his steady determination to sink his own temperament in the exact impression, as Manet put it, 'of an hour of the day'. Sisley has never been taken seriously enough by his countrymen: there is only one of his paintings, for instance, in the National Gallery. It's time we bought another. □

THEATRE

Benedict Nightingale

London pride

The Shoemaker's Holiday by THOMAS DEKKER *Olivier*
The Worlds by EDWARD BOND *New Half Moon*
Ella by HERBERT ACHTERNBUSCH *ICA*
Texts by SAMUEL BECKETT *Riverside*

Thomas Dekker, so the National programme informs us, 'spent three years in goal for debt'. My word, those Elizabethans gave their unluckier citizens some dire penalties to pay — or do I mean, to save? It is, however, perfectly true that it's impossible to evaluate Dekker's social or moral views without talking, and talking a lot, about money; and even if his *Shoemaker* isn't much more sophisticated than *Dick Whittington* in its tacit presentation of those views, it still offers oblique glimpses of the avarice and ruthlessness that must have characterised the wheelings and dealings of the increasingly powerful merchant classes circa 1600. The ageing Elizabeth's London was like Darwin's Galapagos, a laboratory where the survival of the fittest was disconcertingly demonstrated.

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The problem director John Dexter has set himself is to reconcile such socio-historical truths with rags-to-riches fantasy and fun: at once to remind us that the play records an important stage in our economic evolution and to recognise that it is, after all, a genial comedy with a happy ending. Sometimes the script gives him direct help, in terms of imagery used as well as of behaviour observed. 'A pound of care pays not a dram of debt' is (significantly enough) the comfort given to the depressed Mayor of London, who then proceeds (significantly enough) to offer financial inducements to his daughter, who has refused the 'city gentleman, full of revenues' he wants her to marry. But Dexter still feels a need to emphasise and elaborate. At the start, merchants gratuitously lurk behind the principals, jingling their purses like muffin-men their bells; and so it goes on until even the nobleman-hero, Rowland Lacy, is indicating by not-so-subtle gestures that he'll free an impressed shoemaker from the army if his employer comes up with a satisfactory bribe.

This last is unwarranted and counter-productive, since it alienates us from the character and leaves us wondering if he really is a fit husband for the merchant's daughter he supposedly loves and his powerful uncle wants him to reject. Indeed, there are several points at which Dexter's production, for all the clarity and fluency it brings to a plot with a not-altogether-unjustified reputation for perplexity, seems somewhat tendentious. The impressed shoemaker returns from the wars, not just 'lame', but lacking a leg: a mutilation which (a) rather sensationally demonstrates the brutality of the Elizabethan world, (b) visibly infects with guilt the lovelorn nob Lacy, now disguised as a shoemaker himself, and (c) helps to spoil the general mirth when the master-shoesmith, Simon Eyre, arrives with news that he has been elected sheriff. The end of the scene, straightforwardly upbeat in the original, becomes edgy and even doleful, with Eyre's wife bewildered and frightened by her husband's elevation, his foreman inexplicably in tears, and fraught feelings everywhere.

THIS RAISES an interesting question, relevant to many classical revivals nowadays: when is it legitimate for a director to display greater sensitivity than his playwright? The answer presumably is, when he does not distort what is fundamental. The scene I've just cited is a slippery example, because its subtleties are consistent with much that is incontrovertibly admirable about Dexter's production. We feel that the shoe-hatchery is a living, bustling community: pisspots to empty, straw to be sprinkled on the floor, pipes to be smoked and pints drunk, and, above all, individual workpeople authentically reacting to each other's idiosyncracies. So why not still more psychological detail, to add to the rest of Mr Dexter's documentation?

Perhaps because in this instance there is the distortion of sentimentality. The Elizabethans could witness and even share sorrow, then exult in good fortune, then unequivocally make whoopee, all without the sense of incongruity and shame a good liberal would doubtless feel nowadays; and it isn't a director's job to (in effect) judge them for the sin of not being modern. Dekker isn't to be refashioned until in tone, character and even spelling he becomes Dexter.

Yet Dexter and his cast deserve everyone's admiration for transforming a potentially musty play into what is, all cavils aside, an unexpectedly enjoyable evening. Alfred Lynch's Eyre exudes unaffected gusto, whether he's celebrating his advancement or inventively abusing his wife, Brenda Bruce wearing a zonked expression and outrageously *arriviste* dresses; John Salthouse converts the most lively and loyal of his employees from the usual jaunty apprentice into an interestingly combative and streetwise kid; Nicholas Selby's Mayor dispatches flat, unlovely vowels through his nasal passages, a suburban Shylock still commuting to and from the London Rialtos; and there's an amusing parody of heroic boy-kings from David Yelland, who arrives bedecked with fleur-de-lis, a bored and slightly tipsy *deus ex machina,* to forgive, reconcile, divorce, marry, ennoble, and generally parcel up the plot. And, again all cavils aside, we're left with a strong sense of a society in transition, and, more specifically, of a merchant class with a new pride and confidence in itself. It is coming to regard with contempt those aristocratic idlers who still presume to patronise it; it sees true nobility as the product, not of birth, but of craftsmanship and effort; it regards the City of London as the centre of a world whose frontiers its trading successes are constantly expanding; its pores already seep with money, for better or worse, and, for better or worse, it feels its future assured, all impossibilities possible.

That brings me naturally to *The Worlds,* which comes close to recommending terrorism as a means of disposing of Simon Eyre's descendants; but I reviewed it at length from Newcastle in 1979 and hope to return to it when Bond's latest opens next month. So all I'll say now is that Nick Hamm's production, with Ian McDiarmid a tycoon who makes Lear's progress from empty arrogance to flailing distraction, or Timon's from show to vindictiveness, does all it can for the play. As for *Ella,* it involves a mentally backward woman who endures miseries as numbing as even a modern German dramatist could devise. What distinguishes the play from a hundred similar laments for lost lives is that she's impersonated throughout by her son, who wears drag and recites her biography in the first person from inside a rather obviously emblematic chicken-pen. The presumed object is to show how the past shapes the present, her suffering defines him; but there's little sense of that in Bill Paterson's feisty, funny performance, which tends to demonstrate the resilience of the human spirit and, no less paradoxically, to give us a more entertaining play than its author actually wrote.

A comparable, if grimmer, energy comes from Joseph Chaikin at Riverside, a gaping, baggy derelict delivering his own adaptation of prose works first published in the Sixties. Much, very much, of the Beckett we've learned to know and respect is embryonically here; but the hour-long outpouring is even harder to absorb at one sitting than *Not I* or *That Time.* Best buy *Texts for Nothing* (Calder, £3.95 & 95p) and read it first. □

Weekend competition

No 2674 **Set by May Day**

Ever anxious to be of service to our fellows we suggest that compers help out the Liberal-Soc. Dem. alliance by providing suitably rousing campaign songs. Max. 12 lines. Closing date 10 July.

No 2671 **Set by Jim Anthony**

Nonsense sonnets, as written by computer.

Report **By Len the Unlucky**

Talk about the loneliness of the long-distance sonnet-reader. It's always the same in the summer. Everyone else is otherwise engaged. Jeff Squiffy has ———— (expletive deleted, and they call this a libertarian paper) off to Ceylon (don't blame me for that either; *he* insists that 'Sri Lanka' is reactionary). And She Who etc. refuses to do a hand's turn since her hols, declaring that her heart's in the Highlands and far above anything as sordid as work.

I know nothing more calculated to bring on a bilious attack either than reading several consecutive sackfulls of nonsense. And in the end, since so many of you actually wrote sonnet-like sonnets which rhymed, scanned and tantalised with the deceptive promise of meaning, I awarded ten of the best to each of those printed below on an entirely arbitrary, subjective and idiosyncratic basis. I liked them.

And while I'm about it, two quid from the Complex benevolent fund to the following for ingenuity: Ian Stirling for using only phrases from the *NS* of 5 June; Bill Greenwell whose simple computer hadn't got beyond the letter 'A' in its initial programme; Earl Wining whose computer could spell and scan but not hear; and Tim Deveson for the introduction to a real-life printed poem which managed to keep up best random comp form for 113 pages.

When I begin to demythologise
The rabbits on an inter-city train,
Watching the persiflage that daily tries
To conquer the parameters of pain,
I drink a yard of penetrating stout,
And hang the manifestoes up to dry,
Appalled that politicians seem to flout
The fragile epileptics in the sky;
Then, petrified with an excess of bone,
I fling the brandy to the awkward squad,
And cycle off to meditate alone
The perpendicularity of God;
For none but nincompoops delay the dawn
Across the grand panjandrum's croquet lawn.

STANLEY J. SHARPLESS

Shall I confine thee to a brewer's dray?
Thou art more bumpy and more obdurate.
Gruff kings do bake their chelsea buns by day,
And brewer's grease hath all too deep a plate.
Sometime, too pink, the pie of Devon pines
And often is its predilection hymned,
And every bear with bear sometime combines,
Ey Jove, or Laker's changing horse, red-rimmed.
But thy infernal brewer's motorcade
Will cause erection of that bear at most;
Nor shall Beth find thy redbreast on her spade

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When in infernal spines of rhyme thou toast.
So long as Stan can seethe or pies can breed,
So long is whist, and whist is wife indeed.

PETER NORMAN

Alas! my storage-heater's pinkish truss
Has squandered all the three-star coffee-beans,
And, synchronising with a naughty bus,
Betrays what the suburban time-switch means.
No sandwich has appeared, no patent quilt;
And someone stole the ochre from my heart.
My cousin's porous tadpoles, bright with guilt,
Still emulate the dense unwritten fart.

The Staff-Nurse shot a stationary worm,
With no assistance from the present tense;
While Euston Station's sprayed for end-of-term
And guileless eggs are massing, ten years hence...
To late! the woollen football's unprepared;
No distant yoghurt-music shall be spared.

JIMMIE PEARSE

Before the inmates of a sober crêche
Some spiders hunt for worms in old elastic,
And pillowcases filled with broken flesh
Disgorge on to the ranks of naked plastic.
Then vomit fills the air with sudden song,
And rubber rules in every maiden part,
With pink and dusty beards the night is long,
And thongs bely the contents of the heart.
Gross is the steaming order of the way
Where stallions slide their handles full in leather,
Vibration rends the cushions under pay
And satin closes sheaths of mink together.
Remember that transparence is the end,
And what the butcher left us will not bend.

F. PITT-KETHLEY

With damsels greased like prunes to plump sour nodes,
Eclectic lizards prance the costive quay;
While, galvanising corybantic lodes,
Nine punk-warm Mommas castigate my knee.
What loss the hierophant when, flaying lard,
Fell mincemeat stipples flakes of yellow musk?
Can Atahualpa spay the puling card?
Can buxom jelly-babies knit her tusk?
But oh those low tumescent! Those dark
Refulgent crones! Now tax the limpid clue:
Such fleece alone can thread more tritely stark
My blue *palazzo* swathed in tailors' glue.
Amphetamine, my poppet, broil your spanker —
Marmoreal spuds my only turgid anchor!

ROBIN RAVENSBOURNE

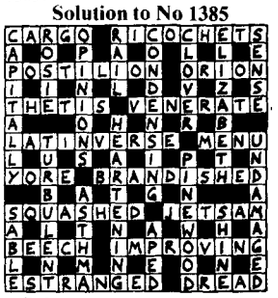
NS Crossword goes monthly

We are discontinuing Setsquare crosswords and will instead be offering NS crossword buffs a really difficult Salamanca puzzle in the first issue of each month, starting on 3 July. In that issue we shall be publishing S43, with the final Setsquare solution — No 1386. From August onwards, Salamanca crosswords and solutions will appear together — i.e. August puzzle with July solution.

Prizes will be increased under the new arrangements to £5 book tokens for the first three correct solutions opened.

Below, we print the solution and prizewinners to Setsquare 1385.

Solution to No 1385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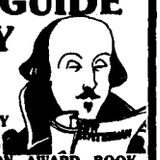

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DUREX BY POST, plus samples. 48 Gossamer £5 10p, Featherlight £5.75, Extra Safe £6.25; 24 Rough Riders £5, Bumper Mix (save £3) £5. Positions Book or Joy of Sex £4.50. Aids Cat. 50p. Summit Ltd (N1), Bath St, Ashby D.L.Z. Leics.

DUREX DISCOUNTS 48 Gossamer £5.28. Fetherlite £5.88. Nu-form E/Safe £6.36. Safeguard Enterprises (NS), 102 Newgate St, London EC1A 7AP.

EDUCATED MAN, 47, seeks unattached, sensuous female, up to 55, for fun and friendship. Large ladies welcome. Nationality unimportant. All replies with tel. no please. Box 1710.

FINEST LIBRARY in Europe of its kind: Theosophy, Comparative Religion, Philosophy, Modern Civilisation, Psychology, Science, Mysticism, Unexplained Phenomena. Subs £3 p.a. Details on this/events, classes/free lectures s.a.e. The Theosophical Society (Ref. NS), 50 Gloucester Place, London W1H 3HJ. 01-935 9261.

FOREIGN STUDENT needs financial aid to do research at University. Sponsors kindly required. Box 1684.

GAY & LESBIAN Readers — booklist (14p stamp); Essentially Gay, P.O. Box 12, Rotherham.

INTELLIGENT, Nottingham-based male, 30, working-class roots, educated, travelled, sks complimentary Ms, 25-40, for caring relationship. Box 1711.

JEWISH GENTLEMAN, retired, seeks companion, lonely lady sharing mutual interests etc. wkdays. Box 1690.

JOURNALIST, 48, 6 ft, lively interest in most things, seeks slim, intelligent lady in 30s (Central London preferred) for wining and dining and general friendship. Box 1678.

LIVELY, FEMININE, single. Jewish, prof. girl, 30, 5' 7", varied interests, good looking, seeks tall, mid 30s, like-minded, reliable, outgoing, prof. businessman. Box 1728.

MALE LONDONER, quite shy, pretty ordinary, seeks female 18+, for friendship, hopefully more. Looks not prime concern. Box 1691.

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UNATTACHED PROFESSIONAL people, 25-50, seeking discriminating contact of their choice with others of similar lifestyle, find Intraplan ethical, successful, inexpensive. Details: Diana Anstee, 118 Kensington Church Street, London W8 4BH.

MATURE, attractive, English ex-career/wife, seeks cultivated, solvent man, 55/65, possibly academic, executive, creative background, hopefully permanent mutual, humorous, caring; wide interests, town/country, Ulster/England. Box 1692.

MEDIAWATCH: aims to circulate peace groups with techniques of media analysis and counter-information. Details from: MEDIAWATCH, c/o END, 6 Endsleigh St, London WC1. Subscription £2. Individuals/groups already working in this field, please send information.

NORTH-WEST LIBERATED LADY (33) — professional, divorcee, non-smoker, enjoys cultural and outdoor activities — seeks tall, unattached, affectionate male for friendship, possibly marriage. Telephone number, small photo (returned) appreciated. Box 1687.

'NO SEX, please, we're British.' Cambridge feminist, 30, foreign-born, finds this disconcertingly true and seeks kind, gentle, witty, articulate academic/professional man, 25-40, to remedy situation. Box 1732.

NOT A FANTASY millionaire, but ordinary, just solvent man, early 40s, interested travel, films, old things and places, seeks younger lady to share above. Distant origins, offspring welcome. London/reachable. Box 1731.

PAID COMPANION to care for handicapped, but cheerful old lady. Ring 01-346 3335.

PEACE WORKER, socialist, mid-forties, wide interests arts, sciences sks laughing, caring woman as mate. Herts/Beds/London. Box 1700.

PHILANTHROPIC SOLICITOR, or modest costs, sought for litigation by student, London. Box 1745.

PRESENTABLE, educated lady, late 30s, seeks tall, slim gentleman, for interesting (but normal!) relationship. Worcs/Warks area. Box 1683.

PROFESSIONAL WOMAN, Edinburgh, with two teenage children, seeks intelligent relaxed man (40-50), possibly with children, to share large Dordogne Farmhouse 11-24 July. Box 1670.

PIANO REPAIRS, TUNING, uprights, grands and pianolas. Denys Parsons MSc. 01-340 4695.

RESEARCH UNDERTAKEN in London Library & elsewhere; also indexing, cataloguing, ghosting. 01-997 0748.

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SUCCESSFUL AMERICAN writer, male, 39, living north London, seeks independent, fun-loving female. Box 1714.

SUCCESSFUL PUBLISHER/WRITER, 55, 5' 5", seeks much younger, attractive, liberated, intelligent companion/assistant for adventurous foreign travels and sensual intimate but non-oppressive relationship. London/S.E. Photo (small!), details appreciated. Box 1676.

SUPER SPECIAL attractive male, 37, seeks non-smoking, **EXTRA SPECIAL** pretty female, for lasting relationship. Sm. photo/phone. London. Box 1709.

UNPRETENTIOUS, professional man, well educated, established, presentable, 50, alone in Central London, seeks 35ish female counterpart, perhaps green-fingered blue-stocking. Box 1743.

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YOUNG-LOOKING Male, 41, environmentalist, sks tall, slim, caring female, 25-35, pro-family. S. Yorks, will travel. Box 1729.

YOU COULD never accuse us of being boring! The trendies are having their own disco on 4 July whilst the sporty ones are going ballooning and parachuting. The arty set are off to see the William Strang and Picasso Exhibitions and the theatre, ballet and opera lovers are already booked to see 'Child Byron'; Kafka's 'The Trial'; 'Orfeo' and 'La Fille Mal Gardee'. I'm going to all of these! Why don't you come with us? We're the Encounters Group contactable through Sara on 01-283 5748 (£25 membership p.a.).

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All private ads must be prepaid. You can place ads over the phone and they will be published on receipt of your payment. Or post to: **CLASSIFIED DEPT., THE NEW STATESMAN, 10 GREAT TURNSTILE, LONDON WC1V 7HJ.**
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A UNITED KINGDOM PROGRAMME OFFICER
to service and maintain the projects that War on Want supports in the U.K.

This involves developing a working relationship with projects, assessing new applications for support, and advising on future policy in this area. The U.K. Programme Officer will also be expected to carry out campaigning work relating to the U.K. Programme.
Applicants should have experience of community development, or of developing alternative social and economic structures.

Salary approximately £7,000 p.a.
Further details from: Personnel Office, War on Want, 467 Caledonian Road, London N7 9BE. Telephone 01-609 0211.
Closing date for applications 10 July, 1981.

EDITOR
POETRY REVIEW

The editorship of **POETRY REVIEW** will be vacant after the December 1981 issue. Interested applicants should write for details, not later than **13 July**, to

The Publications Officer,
The Poetry Society,
21 Earls Court Square,
London SW5 9BY.

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PRESS OFFICE AT DIPLOMATIC MISSION.
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Application forms & further details from Deputy Director (Admin.), UKIAS, 7th Floor, Brettenham House, Savoy St, London WC2E 7EN.
Interviews will be held at this address.

TEMPORARY CLERK TYPISTS
needed **3-28 August. £80 p.w.**
Phone or write to: **Anne Hock, National Union of Agricultural and Allied Workers, 308 Gray's Inn Road, London WC1X 8DS. Tel: 01-278 7801.**

OV SELECTION CATERS for the more mature person as well as graduates and 'A' level students with typing and office skills. Phone Odette Veazey, OV Selection (Emp. Agy), 92 Brompton Road (opp. Harrods), SW3 1EH. 01-589 0590.

WANTED socialist with publishing experience to work for CSE Books, starting as soon as possible. Salary negotiable. Applications with names of two referees to: CSE Books, 55 Mount Pleasant, London WC1X 0AE by 14 July.

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At current rates, salaries tax will not exceed 15% of gross income. Housing at a rental of 7½% of salary, education allowance, leave and medical benefits are provided.
Further particulars and applications forms may be obtained from **The Association of Commonwealth Universities (Appts.), 36 Gordon Square, London WC1H 0PF, or from the Appointments Unit, Secretary's Office, University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong.**
Closing date for applications: **9 August 1981.**

WANTED Voluntary workers to help run a charity in East End. Tel. 515 3023 for interview.

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Theatres

ALDWYCH THEATRE Royal Shakespeare Company 836 6404. Booking now open for new London Season: 'Troilus & Cressida' opens 1 July, 'The Merchant of Venice' opens 14 July, 'As You Like It' opens 21 July. Recorded booking info 836 5332 cc 379 6233. The Warehouse 836 6808 premiere of Howard Brenton's 'Thirteenth Night'. Fortune 836 2238 RSC presents The Hollow Crown' and 'Pleasure & Repentance'. Piccadilly 437 4506 RSC in Willy Russell's 'hilarious' 'Educating Rita'.

NATIONAL THEATRE 928 2252. Olivier (open stage) 'A Month in the Country', 'The Life of Galileo', 'The Shoemaker's Holiday'. Lyttelton (proscenium stage) 'The Caretaker', 'Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf'? Cottesloe (small auditorium) 'One Woman Plays', 'Sergeant Musgrave's Dance'. See daily press for dates and times or ring recorded info 928 2256.

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Publications

POEMS are invited for the first issue of 'FIRST TIME' a Bi-Annual Magazine designed to encourage first time Poets. Details from Josephine Austin, 80 St Helen's Road, Hastings, E. Sussex. Please enclose s.a.e.

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SCHOLAR'S LIBRARY for sale. Art & Architecture, Biography, Cambridge History of English Literature, Dictionaries, English & foreign literature, History, Literary criticism, Oxford History of England, Pelican History of Art, Philosophy, Scrutiny. 5,000 titles. Specific requests welcomed. Prices negotiable. Winkler, 8 Melville Road, London SW13. 01-748 9035.

SOCIAL HISTORY catalogues issued. A. C. Hall, 30 Staines Road, Twickenham, Middx.

WRONG SIDE of Offa's Dyke? Keep in touch via 'ARCADE' — Wales' new fortnightly current affairs and Arts Mag in English. Annual sub. (inc. p.p.) £14 (£7½ year). 43 Lower Cathedral Road, Cardiff. (Tel. 28917).

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Political Publications

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George Bridges & Ros Brunt (eds)

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NS Reports are on sale in W. H. Smith shops and radical bookshops, or direct from New Statesman at £1.50 (including postage and packing). Please send your cheque with order to Ted Peacock, New Statesman, 10 Great Turnstile, London WC1V 7HJ. Bulk order rates obtainable on request.

Meetings

CENTRAL LONDON FABIAN SOCIETY. Frank Ward on 'Socialism not Social Democracy' at 5 Tavistock Place, London WC1, on Wednesday 1 July at 7.30 p.m. All welcome.

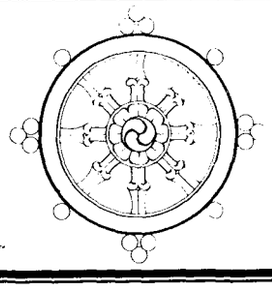
ICA EVENTS. The Mall, London, SW1. 30 June 1.00 Angela Carter has several of her best known books re-issued this month and visits the ICA to talk about her work. Tickets £1.00 (ICA Day M'ship 40p). 930 3647

TONY BANKS, Arts Chairman GLC, speaks at W. & SW. London Proposed Equity Branch, Lyric Hammersmith, 11 a.m. Sat. 4 July. All welcome. Inf. Ian Flintoff 01-385 3800.

RAMAKRISHNA VEDANTA CENTRE Sunday lectures on religion and philosophy. Enquiries 06285 26464.

SATURDAY 27 JUNE: Socialist Environment and Resources Association AGM 10.30 a.m.-5 p.m. Caxton Hall, Caxton St, London SW1. Afternoon speaker Robin Cook MP, 'Socialism and The Ecology Movement'.

THEOSOPHY: S.a.e. for pamphlets, book list, programme. Sunday 28 June 8 p.m. Open Q/A Meeting. 'Psychic Powers and Hazards'. ULT, 62 Queen's Garden's, London W2 3AL.



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